



RAZORCAKE

#61



airfix
kits

christ on parade

sun god

robert

mcchesney



\$4



behind
bullying:

an interview with

andrew vachss

frank caruso

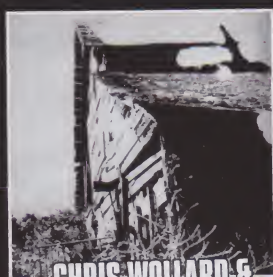
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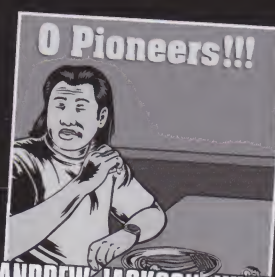
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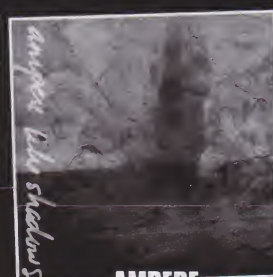
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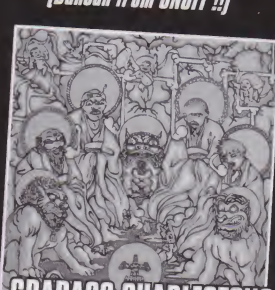
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Razorcake is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly to us—regardless of amount—have been essential to our continued survival.

Allow me to bite a line from my good friend, *Go Metric*, and *Zisk* editor Mike Faloon. "Why can't we change the conjunction from 'or' to 'and'?" Internet blogs and websites *or* zines? Printed words on paper *or* digital screens? Paper *or* pixels? Monkeys *or* robots? Why not both? Why not *and*—and be smart about it? Indubitably, I can tell you where my heart and soul remain. You're holding it in your hands. But that doesn't mean *Razorcake* can't augment itself with digital stuffs that don't compromise the zine. No matter how hard we've tried in the past, we've never been able to have the zine play actual music or provide moving pictures, two things our website can do. But here's the critical difference: we use these digi-gizmos to turn people onto zines, not to debone what we find true, lasting value in.

This may not be a good business model, holding aloft the torch of paper expression—no shit—but it is a great model for the continued celebration DIY punk culture that continues to be relevant, alive, largely overlooked, and unconcerned with mainstream approval... just like zines themselves.

If you would like to give *Razorcake* some longer-term, hands-on assistance, we're looking for volunteers in the following areas: locally based non-profit grant writer and non-profit fundraiser, FileMaker Pro wizard, Salesforce programmer, PC network specialist. If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand.

Contact us via www.razorcake.org if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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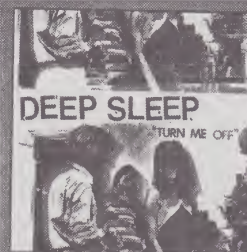
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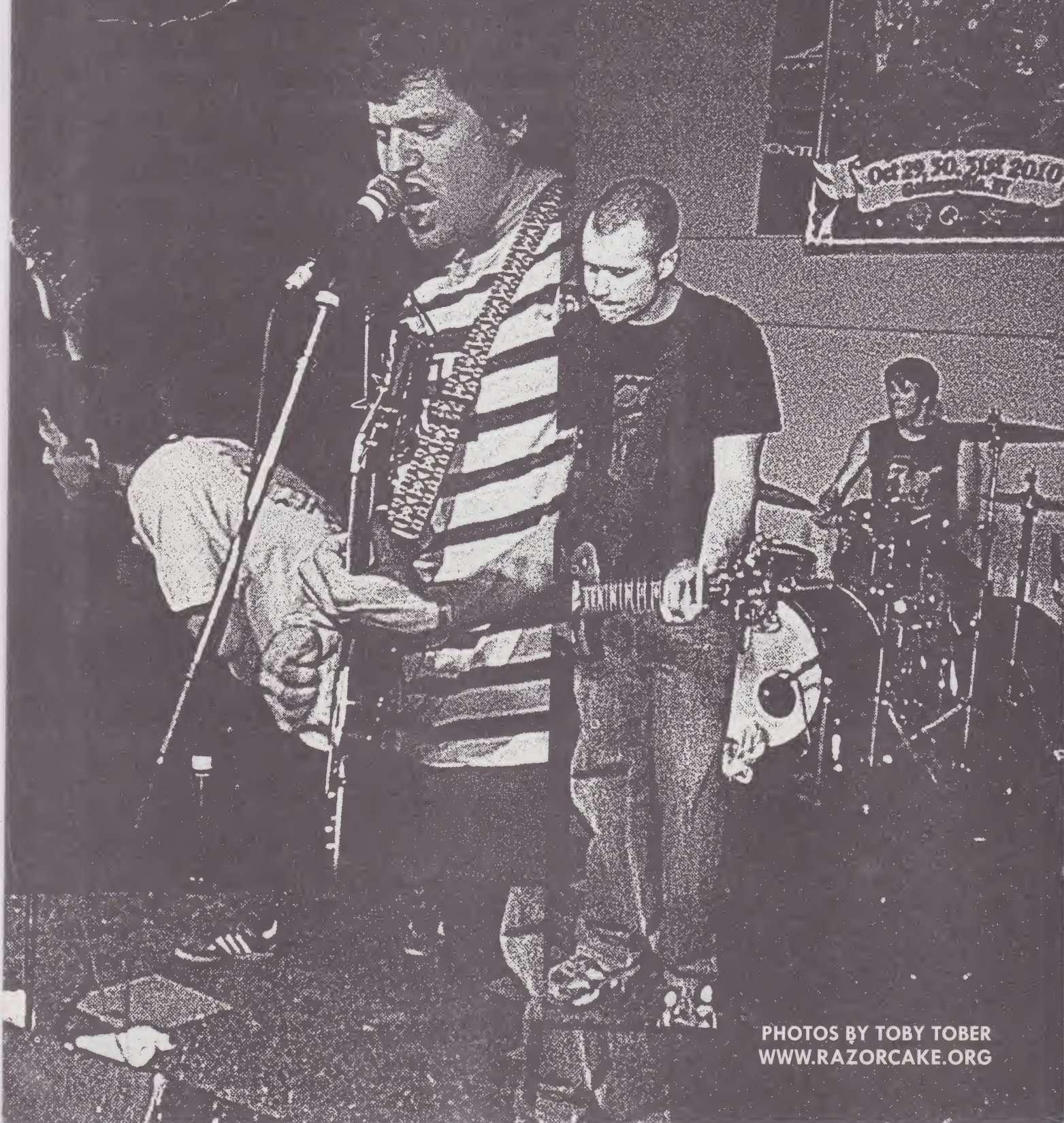
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GRABASS LIVE AT FEST



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Analog Counter Attack

I get it. Much of the world is turning digital. It doesn't mean I have to like it. I just don't think throwing away a beautiful, elegant, useful, cheap, no-processors-needed mode of communication—the printed word—is a smart thing to do.

Some of the most rewarding times in my life have come from reading. It isn't arbitrary that *Razorcake* is, first and foremost, a zine. Paper pulp—not pixels—is the heart and soul of what we do.

Here is what I understand. A zine, when you get one, has been finished—edited, stapled, constructed. It stands alone. You can take it and be alone or you can roll it up in your pocket and travel around with it. Perhaps, most importantly, you can poop with it. With a zine, you don't have to worry about downloading a virus. You don't constantly have to upload new software or worry about a hard drive crashing and losing everything. If you accidentally drop a zine in the toilet, you're only out a couple of bucks. Depending on how it fell into the toilet, it still may be readable. You don't have to pay a mega-conglomeration telecommunications company for the data connection to a zine. You don't have to pay a hell-a-corporation for an electronic device that's reliant on conflict materials mined in slave-based, blood-soaked lands to get you onto the internet to read that zine. Open it up. Read it. Get some newsprint on your fingers. Fun.

Oh, what's that? *Razorcake* should feel bad that it kills trees? "Go green. Be solely a website." Before this argument takes any traction, think scope and scale. *Razorcake*—and I'd go so far as to say every zine made in America this year—consumes a fraction of one percent of the energy it takes to run NPR's servers for a day.

Sure, sure, people want stimulation and gratification every nanosecond, seemingly unconcerned about things I hold dear, like privacy, one-on-one human relationships, time to reflect and for critical thought, and lessened exposure to huge corporations that want our money and little else.

When I was standing in line to pee at a Street Eaters show, all five dudes in front of me pulled out their phones and stared at glowing screens instead of just listening to the music or talking to one another.

Perhaps it's that I spend most of my day on the computer, working, and I see digital communication solely as a set of tools. Like screwdrivers, hammers, or chain whips, they have their utility if used correctly, but they shouldn't be used to dismantle, smash, and strip such a great medium. If anything, I want *Razorcake*'s digital stuff to work even harder to share this great thing: the printed word.

Zines' true powers aren't revealed quickly. They don't have digital friends that chatter-chatter every second, they don't go viral, and they won't make you cooler (that ship has long sailed). They make potential friends and enemies one at a time. They spread quietly, individually. All *Razorcake*'s ever been shooting for is getting into the hands of those who are interested in kickass DIY punk rock culture. That's it. We're looking for one-percenter music fans, not developing an advanced algorithm designed to separate as many people from their money as possible.

Zines are worth fighting for and that's exactly what we're doing.

It's an analog counter attack.

—Todd Taylor

AD / CONTRIBUTOR DEADLINES

ISSUE #62

April 1st, 2011

ISSUE #63

June 1st, 2011

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Cover design by Douglas Burns
www.douglasburnsart.com
Cover photos by Mark Murrman

Congratulations! Megan Pants and Andy got hitched!

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"I believe
happiness comes
at a pace no one
can see."

—ADD/C, "Disabilities"

THANK YOU Snap those pieces together to build your own—what is it?—Spitfire, Focke Wulf... Sopwith Camel? thanks to Douglas Burns for designing the cover and Mark Murrman for the photos; *Razorcake* not real, Olive Garden real thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; "Hey, Bill, I've seen that mouth on the cover of a 7" before" thanks for his taco'n'sword'n'sombrero on Consuelo illo. in Jim's column; Walkin' on the sunny side of the street all happy'n'stuff thanks to Nation of Amanda for her illo. in Amy's column; Rats with fur coats thanks to Steve Larder for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; I'd like the T-shirt, please—more Lemmy, less Sammy in the monitor—thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Dale's column; Balaclavas and bare nipples on an ice lake thanks to Chris Dorn for his Rhythm Chicken photo; "Hi, naked guy" thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Nerb's column; It's the Blythe doll of llamas! thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Gary's column; Yes, a serious look into bullying. No joke. Thanks to all involved—Trey Bundy for the interview and Andrew Vachss, Frank Caruso, and Zak Muchaw for all the talent, research, and lifework they put into the article; Sometimes, threads develop in issues, and inside of Christ On Parade, there's an incident about bullying. Thanks to Matt Average, Donofthedeat, and Ben Sizemore for their contributions; "Shitty in a good way," fuck, man, you just wrapped up a life's work of aesthetic thanks to Ron Kretsch and Ken Blaze for their words and photos for the Sun God interview; "What are you whispering, Tim?" "Is that woman standing on someone's shoulders or is she just that tall?" These questions cross my mind in that first cross-page spread in the very middle of this issue. Thanks to Tim Brooks, Mark Murrman, Lauren Measure, Bryony, Isaac, and Logan for lending their services to the Airfix Kits interview; Sometimes, it's comforting knowing the exact measurements of how fucked we are. It's like a nice suit of despair to wear to a job you know you won't get, thanks to Ryan Leach and Danny Martin for the interview and illos. in the Robert McChesney interview; In our world, this monkey is up one karate chop to the throat over the robot. Thanks to Marcos Siref for all of the new section header illos. and to the following reviewers in those review sections: Kurt Morris, Candice Tobin, Chris Mason, Garrett Barnwell, Paul J. Comeau, Ryan Horky, Ryan Leach, Sal Lucci, Juan Espinosa, Dontakesphotos, Kristen K, Mike Frame, Vincent Battilana, Sean Koeppenick, Art Ettinger, Jimmy Alvarado, Billups Allen, Matt Average, Jake Shut, Ty Stranglehold, Keith Rosson, MP Johnson, Lord Kveldulfr, Craven Rock, Dave Williams, Ian Wise, Joe Evans III, Speedway Randy, CT Terry, Andy Conway, Mark Twistworthy, Steve Hart, Katie Dunne, and Rene Navarro; These folks got grubby—proofing, editing, dropping off zines, figuring out bulk mail, wizarding photoshop, social networking, and stepping across our bunker's threshold: Matt Braun, Megan Pants, Vincent Battilana, Chris Baxter, Lauren Measure, Rene Navarro, Adrian Salas, Juan Espinosa, Dontputthestickerthere, Jeff Proctor, Joe Dana, MC Stevens, Ever Velasquez, Matt Average, Adrian Chi, Kari Hamanaka, Marcos Siref, Julia Smut, Josh Rosa, Candice Tobin, Kurt Morris, Joe Evans III, Chris Shireman, Toby Tober, and Joshua Ian Robles.

Graffiti that answers the question of "What does the Tiltwheel pill look like in adult diapers?"... on a university campus in San Diego. Thanks, Speedway Randy.

THANK YOU LADY GAGA



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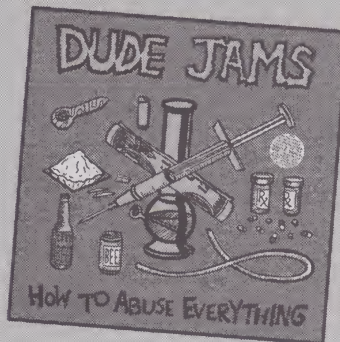
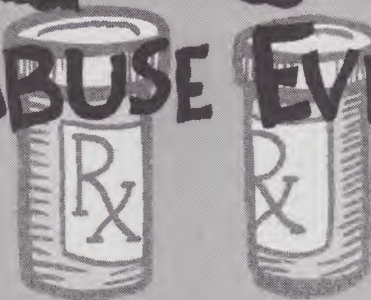
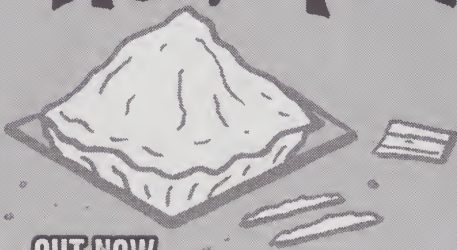
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RAZORCAKE

Issue #61 April / May 2011

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"Zuheir (Negative Approach's drummer at the time) punched my brother. I do remember him getting pretty bloodied by us. My brother was the littlest guy of our crew, so by hitting him, you're just ringing the dinner bell." -Ian MacKay, *Why Be Something That You're Not*, Detroit Hardcore 1979-1985.

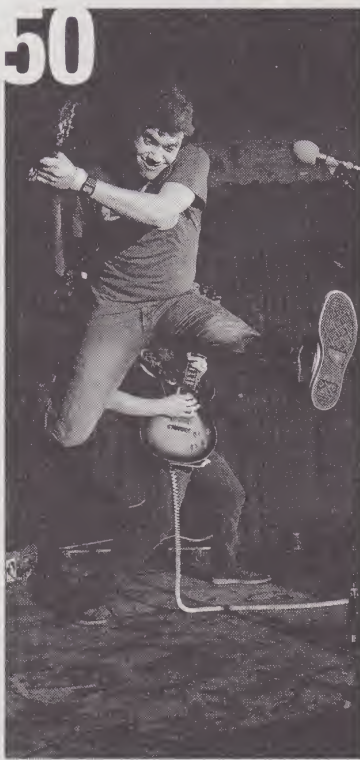
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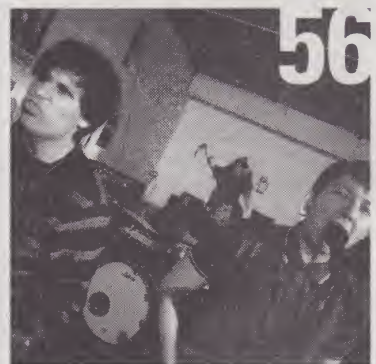
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This issue of **Razorcake** is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs.



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"That's real
newsprint ink
sticking to your
real fingers."

THE MYTH OF THE REAL

A few weeks ago, an old buddy of mine from my undergraduate days at Florida State University rolled through town. He told me he was coming ahead of time. We made plans to grab a burger and a beer at the local brew pub. I knew there would be some problems, largest among them the fact that people my age are getting old, which I cannot understand because I'm staying the same age. And this buddy, I'll call him Dane—because that's his name and he doesn't read *Razorcake* anyway—has belly-flopped into middle age. Suburban home. SUV with a McCain/Palin sticker still on it. Christmas cards with pictures of his kids on them. Kids named Hunter and Aspen. He has a hairline that looks like the toilet seat in a public restroom and a belly that rubs the finish off the *bottom* of his belt buckle. He's gonna hate me if he ever reads this. Still, when I see him, I have to squint real hard to see the guy who, when I knew him, was living with his girlfriend, started having an affair with her best friend (who, not-so-incidentally lived with them), completely fell for the best friend, and moved his stuff into her bedroom (two doors down the hall). As you may have guessed, neither girlfriend became the mother of Hunter or Aspen.

As you may not have guessed, it was good to see Dane. We shared some stories that I love to relive through the retelling. He told me about what some of our old friends are up to. I told him about old friends he'd lost touch with. The beer was good. I gave him no shit about ordering a salad and much shit about his bald noggin. He tried to come back at me with some crack about my gray hair and couldn't figure out if I was serious or not when I told him I dye it that color. We talked about politics and it didn't matter that we were on opposite ends of the spectrum because the world's not gonna change the way I want it to and he doesn't act on his political beliefs, anyway.

And then he pushed my buttons.

He said, "Are you still doing that magazine? What was it? *Razorcookies*?"

"Kinda," I said. "I still write a column for it."

"But you're not *the guy* anymore? What did you do? Sell it?"

It took a while for me to explain to him that, yes, ten years ago I moved out to

California to help start the magazine and that, for four years, I did half of the work on it: editing; proofreading; working with writers, artists, photographers, bands, and labels; laying out columns and interviews; adjusting the resolution of photos so they'd look okay in newsprint; wrestling with distributors; mailing subscriptions; dropping the originals off at the printer and picking up the thousands of copies in a truck; loading and unloading them; so on and so forth. There are even a couple of early issues where, if you look real closely, you'll see that I wrote about a third of the content. Over the next few years of the zine, I gradually backed off. I did a little less and a little less until I now only write a column. Amazingly, volunteers have come along to take up all the slack I left. In fact, volunteers now do almost everything that Todd and I used to do in that ratty *Razorcake* HQ of old. I told him that I was never *the guy* and the magazine was never mine. That Todd and I had started it together, so technically, the two of us would've been *the guys*. But we never were. Even from the first meeting, it was way bigger than me and Todd.

Dane got hung up on a few points. How could we have volunteers? Who got paid? Who made money off it? He was particularly pissed off that I didn't sell "my half" of the zine to Todd. He kept asking me what would happen if the magazine got big. "Like *Rolling Stone* big" were his exact words. What kind of money would I be entitled to? He looked at me like I was retarded for never getting paid money for my labor, for not holding on to some sort of future entitlement to money. He thought the whole idea of a not-for-profit magazine sounded vaguely socialist. I'm pretty sure Dane, like most Americans, doesn't really know what the word socialist means.

Dane is not the first person I've had this conversation with. I could kinda see where it was going. And, sure enough, he said, "Anyway, at least you finally joined the real world."

This statement, this sense of the "real world," is what gets me worse than anything. I did the only thing I knew to do. I pointed to the pub TV, which was tuned to ESPN, and said, "What do you think about ol' Jimbo Fisher." Because Florida State alumni

will always be willing to talk about Florida State football. And this is the real reason I pay attention to football at all: so I can have something to change the subject to when I get stuck in situations like this.

I guess I should be vaguely pleased that a someone like Dane would acknowledge my job—teaching literature at a state university—as real. Most people of his ilk see English as a waste of time. The fact that most people of Dane's ilk are functionally illiterate doesn't seem to matter to them. Though, in fairness to Dane, he's not functionally illiterate. I'm projecting characteristics of others with whom I've had similar conversations onto him. Either way, I know that what I teach has nothing to do with his definition of real. I know that the only thing that makes my job real to him is the fact it pays me a middle-class salary and it's a job middle-class people can understand as being middle class. And middle class, to him, is the real world.

This magazine, on the other hand, is somehow unreal. I mean, obviously it's real. You're holding real paper in your hand as you read this. That's real newsprint ink sticking to your real fingers. It's as real as the crap you're taking while you read this. And this magazine was even legitimated—not by Dane but by others with whom I've had this "real" conversation—by being sold in Barnes & Noble. But the situations that allow this magazine to become reality are unreal. Volunteers. Community. Not-for-profits. Twenty-first century punk rock. If I'm to understand Dane, these are not part of the real world.

When I explained the reality of Todd to Dane, things became even more unreal. How could a man in his late thirties spend all his time in his basement, running a magazine that has no aspirations to make big-time money? How is he going to retire? How can he raise a family when he's doing that? When is he gonna join the real world?

And this is what is so difficult for me: that even now, even among my friends, I'm still being sold only one way of life. It was bad when our parents were telling us that we had to grow up, go to college, get a job, get married, buy a house, have kids, work for a company for forty years, and retire with a pension. It's worse when you've already

grown up and your friends, the very same people who rebelled with you in your youth, are telling you the same thing. It's even more ridiculous when we look at a world where some of those things cease to be an option. Buying a house may have been a good idea once upon a time. It may be a good idea again sometime in the future. But right now, putting down on a mortgage that's gonna cost twice as much as rent for the same place, just so I can own it when I get to be in my seventies is a little ridiculous. Working for a company for forty years—dull as that may have been for our grandparents' generation—isn't really even an option for our parents. No company keeps their employees that long. When your salary gets too high, they lay you off and hire someone who'll work for less. And there are no pensions anymore. I mean, there are. I'm paying into one. I'm just not so naïve as to believe I'll get any money back out of it. And the alternative, something like a 401K, seems like even more of a sucker's deal to me. I don't believe for a second that, if you let Wall Street handle your retirement, you'll be able to retire. That seems the ultimate unreality to me.

So I think of Dane and his real world seems a fantasy to me. He thinks he owns a home, but he doesn't own it. The bank does. They will until at least 2030 or so. He thinks he drives an SUV. There's no sports. There's not much utility. It's just a station wagon with a high roof and an effective ad campaign. He thinks he lives in the real world, yet most of his free time is spent watching television or playing around on the internet, which are both modes of escape out of the real world. Nearly everything about Dane's life is a fantasy he's bought into. Even his name is a fantasy. He's not Danish. Even his son's name is a fantasy. Dane isn't gonna take Hunter hunting.

And it's not that I'm trying to make myself feel superior to Dane. My name is a fantasy, too. Sean is as Irish as they come, and I'm not Irish at all. My life is not much more rooted in reality. I spend most of my time reading fiction and teaching about fiction. Everything about my life is about making sense of the fictions that surround us. So I'm not trying to get on a high horse. I just think about where Dane and I met in the first place, which was a creative writing class. I remember Dane writing hilarious short stories. He's embarrassed about that now. And I think of him rejecting a world of creativity and self-expression so he can hole up in some corporate marketing twat's mundane fantasy version of a reality... Which is fine. He can make his choices. But I think of it and what makes me most upset is not that he gave up his own creative outlets to do it. It's not even that Dane thinks Todd is somehow unreal because Todd never gave up his creative outlets.

What makes me most upset is even the possibility that I've somehow entered this world of reality with Dane.

—Sean Carswell



BRAD BESHAW

HE THOUGHT THE WHOLE IDEA OF A NOT-FOR-PROFIT MAGAZINE SOUNDED VAGUELY SOCIALIST.

I'M PRETTY SURE DANE, LIKE MOST AMERICANS, DOESN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT THE WORD SOCIALIST MEANS.



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"A fiesta with a taquero is equivalent to an open bar at an Irish wedding."

Adventures in the Underground Economy Part II: Taco Pablo and Consuelo's Beautiful Dream

Consuelo is a smart woman with a great job and beautiful house in National City, an incorporated city just south of San Diego.

National City isn't the murder capital of San Diego County, but a larger percentage of murders go unsolved there than anywhere else in the county, mainly because of gang activity. Consuelo also owns property in Tijuana. Compared to TJ, National City might as well be Escondido—a community in the northern part of San Diego County where in 2009 one person was killed and the murder was solved. Don't kid yourself. National City isn't called Nasty City for nothing.

Consuelo, a proud dual-citizen Mexican-American, loves to throw parties. Nothing makes her happier than to be surrounded by friends and family, eating and drinking and dancing to the sounds of guitars and conga drums. Consuelo is your kind of people.

When Consuelo knows the fiesta is going to be big, she calls Pablo. Pablo is a taquero, a taco maker. There is no sweeter word to a fiesta-goer than *taquero*. A fiesta with a taquero is equivalent to an open bar at an Irish wedding: something you dream about but seldom see, so when it actually happens you lose all self-control.

(You had a taquero at your wedding. It's been three years and your friends still talk about it rapturously as if it was a beautiful dream they would give anything to go back to.)

The term "taquero" is a bit misleading because it suggests a solitary figure, like a torero decked out in a sequined apron. The bull is the hungry throng, their appetites whetted by beer and the scent of marinated meat. No. Feeding a party requires a team of taco makers. Thus, taco making in the secondary economy is a family affair. There are tomatoes and onions and cilantro to be chopped. At least three kinds of salsa to be prepared. Beans to be soaked and simmered. Rice to be cooked. There's a fire to be fortified, a small mountain of meat to be grilled, and then, finally, there are the tortillas.

This is not Pablo's first fiesta at Casa Consuelo. She's been using Pablo for years and years. It's not your first fiesta at Casa Consuelo, so you know what to expect from Pablo—what to be wary of—for a taco bar presents many dangers for a white boy.

Your first taco is carne asada with guacamole, grilled jalapenos, and red salsa.

Simple and straightforward. A warm-up taco. A taco that wakes up the senses and sends the message to your stomach: stand by.

Your second taco is pollo asado con salsa verde. Pablo warns you the salsa is very, very hot. You are accustomed to this kind of treatment. Your skin is so white it's practically blue. Taqueros always assume a single chili seed is enough to scorch a trail through your innards and liquefy the contents of your culo. Not so. You can handle the heat. The first time your mother-in-law cooked breakfast for you she was so impressed by your enjoyment of spicy foods, that she grilled a jalapeno for you and watched you eat the whole thing, setting in motion a ritual that would be repeated at family gatherings for years to come.

But Pablo's chile verde is made with habanero, which you discovered when you mistook it for a mild tomatillo salsa into which you repeatedly dipped sliced cucumbers until you realized your mistake. You have been a habanero enthusiast since you sold your truck for \$2,000 and a bag of habaneros and you can enjoy small amounts of Pablo's chile verde surprise, but there are limits to what a man can endure.

Your third taco consists of carnitas and more of the tasty green napalm. The pork, which is stewed and simmered, not fried, is delicious. So good, in fact, you convince yourself it's good for you and go back for more.

Fourth taco same as the first.

For your fifth taco you lie and claim it's for your daughter, even though Pablo knows that no responsible father would ladle so much spicy salsa on a child's plate. You get extra beans and extra rice, because enough is never enough until it's too much. This is why you don't drink or do drugs anymore.

Pablo serves tacos throughout the fiesta. Evidence of the secondary economy is all around you. The musicians who fill the fiesta—and Consuelo's crappy Nasty City neighborhood—with song will be paid in cash. So will the gardener who spruced the place up and stays too long and gets so drunk his wife has to come and pick him up. Consuelo isn't thumbing her nose at the system. These vendors take pride in their work and bring honor to what they do and it shows. They do their part so that Consuelo's friends and family will forget where they are,

forget themselves, and enjoy an exceptional party they will remember for years and years to come. It's all part of the contract.

When you began this story you could not have foreseen that you would end up on the other side of the table, that you would enter the marketplace of the secondary economy not as a consumer, but as a vendor, a tradesman, someone with shit to sell.

It started in Sacramento where you were invited to participate in a group art show at an art collective. It was a three-part deal: show art, read writing, and sell stuff.

It was a privilege to be asked to participate, but it didn't feel like one when you were actually doing it. It would be one thing if people asked you about your work, showed interest, smiled, but most of the time they didn't. They glanced at your crude prints and zines. Tried not to make eye contact. They looked and looked away.

You started to doubt yourself. The price of your goods, your wares, suddenly seemed arbitrary. You wondered if you should lower it to make it more attractive to buyers. You wondered if any price would be attractive to buyers. Then you began to doubt the value of the goods themselves. They were the problem. The goods were no good.

Then someone bought something, a print. The most expensive item on your table. The customer was a printmaker. Someone who taught the art and craft of printmaking for a living. Someone who was very good at something you were barely competent at liked your work enough to buy it. You were overcome with joy, overwhelmed with gratitude. Your goods were good after all. And that's when you started wondering if you'd priced the goods high enough, and the doubts began anew.

It was a maddening, confusing day. Where was the honor? Where was the pride? When your friends who organized it asked you to do it again you said, "I'd love to."*

This is the story of art and commerce. Commerce and art. The two go together like cock and condom. One fits inside the other, but messily and temporarily, stimulating and inhibiting at the same time.

But the secondary economy is flexible. The underground marketplace is fluid.



BILL PINKEL

**This is the story of art and commerce.
Commerce and art.**

**The two go together like
cock and condom.**

This fluidity and flexibility approaches something like forgiveness. The black market understands that objects don't have an inherent value, but rather they are units of measurement like time or speed mutually agreed upon by two parties. Something that costs a dollar on Sunday can cost a hundred on Monday and by Tuesday come crashing down to next to nothing. If you take the data and plug it into a diagram it will show you a rise and fall that marks the course of your first love.

The history of the secondary economy can tell you what happened in the past, but it is a past that has nothing to do with the future. In the secondary economy, the future is nothing but the emotions associated with the present moment, which is always being made up as you go along, i.e. being pulled out of your ass. You can't predict the future without gaming the system, a.k.a. engaging in good business practice.

These are the kinds of things we used to consider before we became addicted to the convenience of credit. In the secondary economy, the barter system flourishes. The art of the exchange is alive and well. Accountability trumps accounting, and as Consuelo well knows, it occurs in the heart.

Your adventures in the secondary economy have shown you how far you've come, how the culture has drifted away from the spirit of the barter. You make your purchases with debit and credit cards, with money you never actually see, sometimes with money you don't actually have. Money never changes hands. Numbers move in electronic accounts. Banks and credit card companies siphon off their cut. The government gets its share. The product is packaged so you feel good about your purchase. The price is clear so you can keep your interactions with the people who make and sell the products at a minimum. The more you buy, the more you

are compelled to consume. Yet it brings no satisfaction. At the end of the day you feel only emptiness. It's enough to make you want to fill your car up with unpaid bills and petrol cans and plow into a credit union with a lit stick of dynamite clenched in your teeth.

But for the people at Consuelo's fiesta, there is nothing secondary about the economics of doing what you love to do. Food and fun, friends and family. Their value can't be quantified. It's all primary.

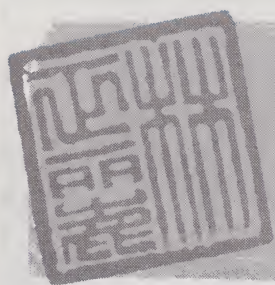
As the party winds down, Pablo packs up his gear. He has another gig down the road in Chula Vista, and there is plenty of work to do.

—Jim Ruland

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RAZORCAKE 09



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADYDZIE

"Please don't judge me for referring to a cartoon chipmunk as a fuck-buddy possibility."

Would Rather

Children, by their very nature of being children, have an infinite amount of time to ponder completely non-essential questions. They have the leisure to thoughtfully consider the great questions that have pestered people-kind for years upon years. These are the *would you rather* quandaries that have enflamed schoolyard disputes and blacktop banter.

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, would you rather eat ice cream or pizza?

If you could only marry one of the Chipmunks, would you rather marry Alvin, Simon, or Theodore?

If you had to switch your fingers and toes, would you rather have your fingers instead of toes (and still have your normal hand-fingers) or toes instead of fingers (and still have normal feet-toes)?

Unfortunately, children, by their very nature of being children, lack the weight of experience that comes from decades of living—of waking up every day for more years than you can count on your fingers (or toes) and trying to figure out what you were waking up for. Though they have the time to think about these questions, they are unable to fully grasp the implications of their decisions because they are still at an age where a game like *tag* is a valid form of interaction.

It's obvious to us now, as adults—as world-weary creatures with skin that loses elasticity everyday the sun beats down on us, what all of the correct choices are.

Pizza. Pizza is as delicious out-of-the-fridge-cold as it is straight from the oven. Pizza contains more food groups than ice cream. Pizza is also much more portable, wrapped in a piece of aluminum foil or a flat cardboard box, for those of us who are constantly on-the-go and can only eat one thing for the rest of our lives.

Simon. Although Alvin might seem like the obvious choice to marry because of his unabashed confidence, disarming chipmunk handsomeness, non-threatening mischievousness, and he's the lead in the band, he is more of a casual fuck-buddy type of friend than marriage material. (Please don't judge me for referring to a cartoon chipmunk as a fuck-buddy possibility, as if this is out the realm of your imagination

and you've never thought about making out with The Little Mermaid.) Simon's a total geek, with his coke-bottle glasses and unassuming wit. He's the one that's going to be the founder of something like Facetweet and be worth hundreds of billions of dollars. He will start a foundation that trains young women from developing nations to become green engineers and win eight simultaneous Nobel Peace Prizes and a trip to the moon, plus one.

Fingers instead of toes (and still have your normal hand-fingers). With this mutant disfiguration, one can conceivably change the dynamics and physicality of competitive gymnastics. Imagine the insane amounts of flipping, contortion-y things that can be accomplished on the double bars or balance beam if the gymnast had fingers on their toes! The only negative I can think of is in the difficulty of purchasing shoes, as we are a majority feet-toes world—but that's a small price to pay to be a multi-gold medaled Olympian.

Amidst the cacophony of nonsense and logic that goes behind discovering the right answer to the *would you rather*s, there was always one that I found to be unanswerable: would you rather be deaf or blind? Of the five senses that children learned that they are capable of sensing, the ability to see and hear were the most obvious to choose between. Smelling, tasting, and touching were secondary to watching and listening to TV.

I was a teenager the last time I had seriously considered this. Teenagers, by their very nature of being teenagers, operate on binary: black or white, prep or punk, brooding angst or naïve joy, horny or bored. Normally, it was easy to choose between either/or, but I was in high school and felt like I was discovering lost artifacts when I listened to a band or read a zine for the first time.

I could not choose between sight and sound—I was adamant about keeping both those senses intact. I was done with the *would you rather*s when I faced the fallacy of a game where the choices were both equally uncool and somewhat plausible. The options aren't

fun to choose between if they aren't absurd, semi-fantastical situations—the loss of vision and hearing wounds mortals everyday. And isn't it a privilege to have the choice of which sense we would begrudgingly allow to degrade as part of a game with a sole purpose to kill time and not necessarily answer tough questions about the human condition?

A couple weeks ago I was walking Jack around the neighborhood. It was late evening and I peered into every lit window as Jack pissed on every other shrub we passed. I watched him skip ahead of me, his small white body bouncing while his four lean legs fluttered beneath him. I looked up at the sky and found familiar constellations and a bright moon beaming down on rooftops and tall trees. And suddenly, without any prompting, a flood of visuals wound its way through my brain.

My mother's face when I surprised her on Mother's Day last year by showing up at the dim sum restaurant a thousand miles away from my apartment. The Tibetan grassland plains with low rolling hills of lush green, an ocean blue sky, and the kinds of large downy white clouds we drew as children, around in 360 degrees for as far as the eye could make out existence. The way DanE's hazel eyes become more emerald when he wears green T-shirts.

I thought about how we can't hear smiles or the ridiculous faces we made during inappropriate times. I thought about Cindy Sherman, Botticelli's "Birth of Venus," and David Hockney. I thought about Mimi Nguyen's "Evolution of a Race Riot" and every other zine I had ever read. I thought about books and the way type floated on its pages, how stoic text can turn my imagination loose.

And it was while walking Jack when I realized that—if I *would rather*—I choose sight. This may be an unpopular sentiment amongst *Razorcake* readers, and, yes, I would miss music and the way it can say things through words sung out loud that we are otherwise incapable of expressing. I would miss the sound of laughter, the power of a hearty rally cry, and dancing my face off.



NATION OF AMANDA

**It felt definitive.
It felt satisfying,
as if I had wizened with age and
was now capable of answering
tough questions.**

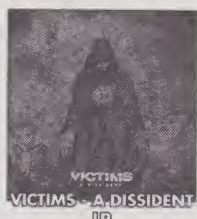
It isn't often that I am reminded of and revisit childhood questions, but when this epiphany struck me, it felt definitive. It felt satisfying, as if I had wizened with age and was now capable of answering tough questions. But it makes me wonder whether I really choose sight, or if it's just the act of

choosing that I needed. That all these years of waking up every morning, and occasionally questioning why I was waking up every morning, had a purpose to it so that one day I could wake up and be definitive about something—know something as completely as I could possibly know it.

Or maybe I chose sight because I'd really love to see a foot-fingered gymnast kill on the balance beam one day.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com

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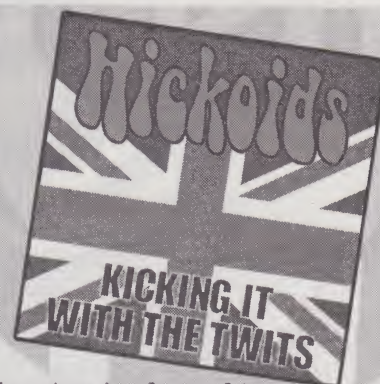


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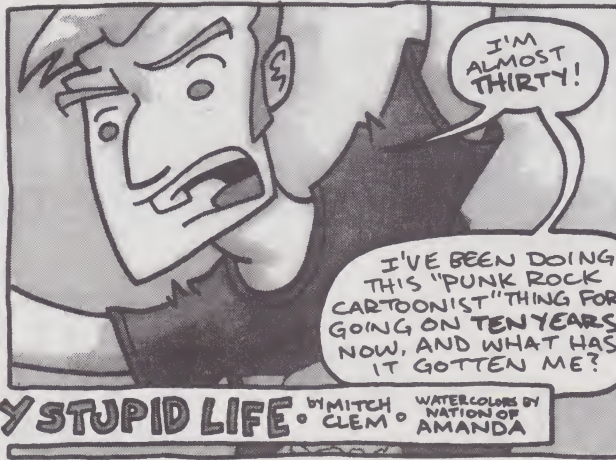
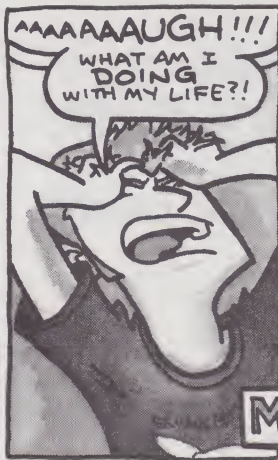
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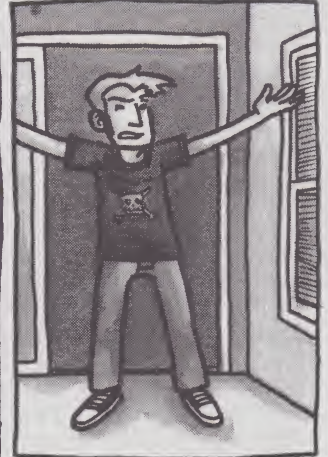
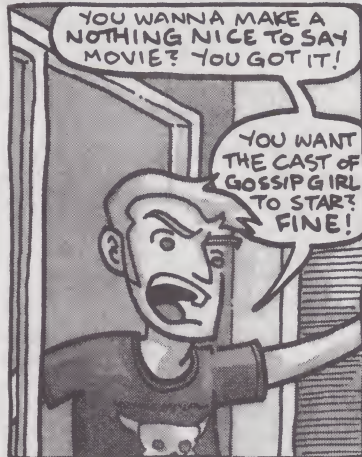
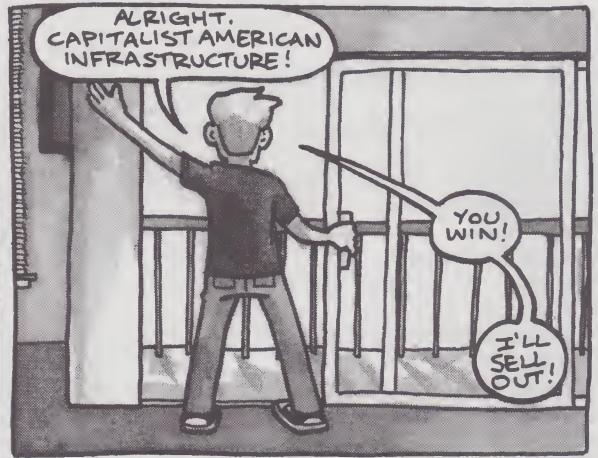
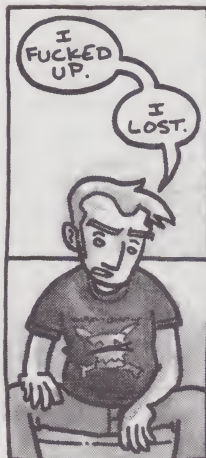


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MY STUPID LIFE • BY MITCH CLEM • WATERCOLORS BY NATION OF AMANDA



DOO!
DOOLA
DOO!
DOO...

DOO!
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

**"Nardwuar:
Charlie Murphy,
sweat on my...
Charlie: Balls!"**

Nardwuar vs. Charlie The Human Serviette Murphy!

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Charlie: I'm Charlie Murphy, and who are you?

Nardwuar: I'm Nardwuar, the Human Serviette

Charlie: The Human Serviette, Charlie Murphy, on a rooftop.

Nardwuar: In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Charlie: Where they have very good marijuana.

Nardwuar: [shows Sammy Davis Jr. record] Mister Sammy Davis.

Charlie: That's right, the Candy Man himself

Nardwuar: That was on *The Kid Who Loved Christmas*?

Charlie: *The Kid Who Loved Christmas*. That's right

Nardwuar: And that was Sammy Davis Jr.'s last movie ever? What was that like?

Charlie: For me man, it was awesome. Actually, it was awesome because I was so happy it was Sammy Davis Jr. I was like, "It's Sammy!" and Sammy was sick so I think I was a nuisance, like, "Who's this bubbly guy that keeps coming around looking at me and going 'It's Sammy!'" and he was feeling horrible.

Nardwuar: And it was the last scene in the movie too, where you were smiling. It was really great, the end of the movie.

Charlie: The end of the movie, Charlie Murphy smiling. [Charlie Murphy smiles]

Nardwuar: And there was a hamster in that movie called Molly. Do you remember that?

Charlie: There was. There was, man.

Nardwuar: And I guess I was wondering—Eddie Murphy put a hamster in one of his other movies. Did you have a hamster growing up called Molly?

Charlie: No. 'Cause you know we realized that hamsters are actually mice with afros. People think they're pets and have them in their houses but the reality is that hamster, gerbil, guinea pig, all they are, is rats with fur coats on. It's the same thing. You know, but you wanna act like it's not what it is. If you think I'm joking, just let 'em loose in your house and see them guys burrowing through the wall and start doing rat-like things.

Nardwuar: Charlie Murphy, I mentioned your movie career but you also have and had a rap career. What can you tell me

about the K-9 Posse? [hands Charlie K-9 Posse record]

Charlie: [holds up record] It's like we doin' slides (referring to Nardwuar handing him records) now... look, Sammy, and now we go to K-9... and the first thing I want to show everyone... funny that you brought this up.

Nardwuar: This is your rap combo.

Charlie: Look right here. Look what it says right there, [points to his name on record] Executive Producer: Charlie Murphy. I produced it. I wrote on it, you know what I'm sayin'? I just didn't rap. I wished I would have rapped, but we had a lot of fun doing K-9.

Nardwuar: Charlie Murphy, sweat on my...

Charlie: Balls!

Nardwuar: Sweat On My Balls. You're...

Charlie: CB4!

Nardwuar: CB4. There we go to the CB4. [shows CB4 record]

Charlie: Another one representing a very colorful and illustrious career, as you can see. We're up to slide (record cover) number three and, come on, man, it gets no better. Let's put the Candy Man in front. [puts Sammy Davis Jr. record in front]

Nardwuar: Back to the CB4, though. When you auditioned for CB4, is it true that you showed up with a gun with bullets?

Charlie: Yes. And I'm not saying anyone else should do that, but this is why it happened. I went in and I did the normal audition. Chris Rock called me up that night and said, "That was excellent. Now, tomorrow when you comin' back in for the call-back, I only have one suggestion to you." I said, "What's that?" and he said, "I want you to be even meaner than you was today." And I was like "Wow," to myself. "That was pretty mean. How you gonna top that?" I said, "Well, I guess I'm going to have to put bullets in the gun for real this time." So the next day I went in with a loaded nine millimeter. I popped the clip in front of them, let them see it was bullets, popped the clip in, jacked it, and then pointed it at Chris Rock, which was very crazy, but I did that! I don't know if Chris Rock knew the gun was loaded and I would never... you know... well, I'm just glad nothing bad happened. I got the role.

Nardwuar: Charlie Murphy, another record for you right here. You worked with Redd... [passes Charlie a Redd Foxx record]

Charlie: Foxx! You gotta give me this whole bag when this is over. I'm going to keep this whole bag of records. You (Nardwuar) got everybody here. Red Foxx, this is the funniest man I've ever met in my life, bar none, okay. I met him on *Harlem Nights* and he was older, so he was like a grandfather figure and I like sitting down talking with old men 'cause old men got a lot of stories. So I have a friend named Woody, who since he was about ten years old, he had one rotten tooth right here in the front [motions to front teeth]. So cut to me and Woody. We're now twenty-four, twenty-five years old. This tooth has been black for fifteen years, and I introduced him to Redd Foxx. When he smiled, Redd Foxx did forty-five minutes of stand-up on his black tooth and the very next day Woody got his tooth fixed. That's a true story.

Nardwuar: Charlie Murphy, is it true that Mr. Dave Chappelle knocked out a bull?

Charlie: Ah, you're talking about *TMZ*. Now I'm going to put it to you this way. We went to the running of the bulls. I know you've seen it before. They released all the bulls and the bull was getting ready to run Dave over, Dave cold cocked it. Dave knocked him out cold. I know you don't want to believe it, but you got to add this to it. I'm not going to say he wasn't scared. He was horrified when he did it, so there was a lot of fear in that punch, but he scored a K.O. Big up for Dave.

Nardwuar: When you're up on stage, are you able to see who's in the audience? Didn't Al Gore come to one of your gigs?

Charlie: What did happen at one of my shows was—I used to have this joke about Dick Cheney around the time when Dick Cheney had shot one of his friends on a hunting trip and it was a funny joke. I can't actually remember exactly how it went, but I was doing this joke every week and we did a show in D.C. When the show was over, this guy walked over and said, "Hey Charlie, great set. Secret Service, I work for Dick," and I was like, "Yeah, oh really? I'm not tellin' that joke no more."

Nardwuar: Baboom!

Charlie: Baboom, yeah.

Nardwuar: What I was curious about is you love the old school comedians, don't you Charlie?



STEVE LARDER

Hamster, gerbil, guinea pig, all they are, is rats with fur coats on. Let 'em loose in your house and see them start doing rat-like things.

Charlie: You have to. If you want to be in the line, you have to memorize and know the history of the line you standin' in. So, yeah, definitely.

Nardwuar: So you have Leroy Smith, I was wondering were you perhaps influenced by that character by Leroy Daniels—*Sexmouth?* [hands Charlie Leroy Daniels record]

Charlie: [screams] This is hilarious! This dude right here was really tight with Redd Foxx!

Nardwuar: He was on *Sanford and Son*, Leroy...

Charlie: Yeah, he was really tight.

Nardwuar: [points to record] Leroy Daniels, Leroy Smith, Charlie Murphy!

Charlie: There's no relation, there's no connection, but, where'd you get these albums from? To a comedian, this is priceless stuff, man! Priceless!

Nardwuar: I love the Laff record label, too. Do you know how many artists were on the Laff record label? Laff was a great record label.

Charlie: Yeah man, it doesn't exist anymore,

but it was nice. These are all the records that when I was a kid, they were in a drawer with the rest of the records but you knew that if you touched one of these and got caught playing it, you were getting your ass whipped. My parents would always say, "We better never catch you playing none of those records!" and, as a result, me and my brothers memorized every one of these records. We memorized them.

Nardwuar: Charlie Murphy, what is trickle down P***Y?

Charlie: AKA trickle down pussy. That's what happens when you're around somebody that has too much on their plate. When you have too much on your plate, some of it's going to fall off. And if someone has the wherewithal to be standing under your plate with a net, they're going to catch it. Same thing with pussy. If someone has all these girls, he can only be with one of them at a time. So, if you're smart enough to be standing around, just waiting for someone to get bored, [as if talking to a woman] "What

are you waiting in line for? I can do you right now." Bingo. Trickle down pussy.

Nardwuar: Well thanks so much, Charlie Murphy. Keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Charlie: Doot doot! [laughs] We work pretty good together. We should have our own show. We'd do a lot of little ad-libs and stuff here.

Nardwuar: That'd be amazing. Well thanks so much!

Charlie: [shows off records] Let's get another one of the slide show. Mr. Hot Pants, *CB4*, all classics, if you haven't gotten these records, I suggest you go to a vintage record store and pick these up because this is the shit.

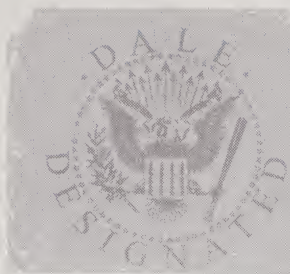
Nardwuar: And this is Charlie Murphy.

Charlie: With the Candy Man!

Nardwuar: And bonus doot-doots! Doot doola doot doo...

Charlie: Doot doo!

To hear and see this interview got to www.nardwuar.com



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DATE

"Get it while it's hot. When it's stale, it's time to bail."

Hard Left down Turd Street

I'm willing to bet at any given time when you pick up your weekly arts and entertainment newspaper, your eyes will catch a glimpse of an ad for a band that refuses to put their over-worked horse to pasture, or even worse, some god-awful reunion show of sorts. Maybe it's because I'm getting a tad up there in my years (compared to the majority of you who read *Razorcake*), or maybe it's because I remember some of these bands when they were already overstaying their welcome while I was growing up. I don't know. But for some weird reason, it's been noticeable enough lately to the point where I'd like to share a few thoughts on the subject.

To even the most steadfast fan, opinions of when a band should hang it up differ greatly from one person to the next. Many fans become jaded after awhile of their fave band continually jumping the shark after they peak, resulting in a "Meh, too bad," attitude towards the band's output. It happens. But then there's the small percentage of fans who will look you straight in the eye and excitedly tell you that *this* record is the *shit*, even though said record is an aural collection of some band's anal experiences with a didgeridoo while on some gnarly peyote trip down in the Great Victoria Desert, Australia. These glazed-over fans aren't even worth the trouble of discussing differences of opinions with, let alone arguing with. It's like trying to scratch a rabid Doberman Pinscher under the chin. Thanks, but no thanks (unless you're purposely trying to yank their chain and rattle their cages, then go for it).

There's one simply fantastic band that has stubbornly stayed the course over the years, and when I mean stayed the course, I mean put in some serious years, even *decades*, of their lives' blood into their bands, not to sway off the road and into the water for some ramp-over-shark shenanigans. That band (besides the Ramones), of course, is Motörhead. Lemmy and Co. have been on the road for over thirty-five years and have over twenty consistently good studio LPs under their belts, not to mention an abundant artillery of singles, live LPs, and comp cuts to keep the most devoted fan's head spinning. Live or in the studio, Motörhead has yet to jump any damn shark, and the blistering records and tours just keep on coming. Not too bad for a guy who just celebrated his *sixty-fifth* birthday last December, wouldn't

you say? Godspeed, Lemmy. Besides Wendy O. Williams (RIP), Joan Jett is the female equivalent of what Lemmy has done for rock'n'roll, and she is sorely underrated. Two thumbs up to you, Ms. Jett, for your unwavering passion for the rock.

There are the bands that have screeched off blazing, with a deafening roar, and then suddenly took a hard left turn down Turd Street. Metallica is a perfect example of this analogy. Hot on the heels of the NWOBHM craze (New Wave of British Heavy Metal) from the late '70s into the early '80s, Metallica threw its hat into the ring, being one of the premiere bands that was toying with the speed and velocity of punk rock, but giving it an entirely new edge of thrashing guitar assault. Formed in 1981, Metallica quickly set its sight on the masses alongside their hardcore underground following that helped get them their first record deal just two years later. From '83 to '86, the band recorded three of the most undisputed thrash classics that continue to hold their own today.

Master of bass Cliff Burton was killed in a tour bus accident in 1986, which was beyond unfortunate, because the huge punk spirit that burned white-hot within Metallica was extinguished. The band continued with a replacement, but the downward spiraling gained some seriously shitty momentum from the fourth album on. Pass.

Another good example of this happening was with Van Halen. The first four records they laid down with nutjob David Lee Roth during 1978-'81 weighed in heavily amongst their fans and a fair amount of punkers alike. (Yes, some actual punkers were digging them some VH at the time, believe it, or don't.) The 1982 hit-and-miss *Diver Down* was starting to push heavily into commercial territory, but once the synth-infused 1984 hit the masses, a lot of eyebrows started to crook, and before you could yelp, "I Can't Drive 55," Sammy "The Sheepdog" Hagar was onboard to replace Roth, helping take the band in a direction I can only define in one word: fecal. The Sheepdog has since left the band and is currently playing in some new outfit with original VH bassist Michael Anthony called Chickenfoot. No, don't ask. Please.

Now, I'm probably going to catch some heated wrath from a few people out there, but I have to mention The Rolling Stones. I'm quite a fan like most, but for me,

personally, I have to draw the line from their beginnings—1964's *The Rolling Stones*—to 1981's *Tattoo You*. Without getting into any shit storms, I'll just say this: quality over quantity; thank you.

KISS is another band that needs to put that over-milked cash cow to bed. With exception to their six studio LPs and two "live" releases spanning from 1974-'77 (which still get regular rotation in this house, so suck it!), this band delved into the fancy-prancy world of hair metal in the '80s, losing its original rock and roll formula once drummer Peter Criss and lead guitarist Ace Frehley split. After some lineup changes, the band went on a couple of very lucrative reunion tours in the '90s, only again to have Peter and Ace leave once more, due to personal angst amongst the ranks (just like the good ol' days). Money Man Gene Simmons has since replaced them both with two guys who wear the same makeup, continuing on with his classic "KISS" tours. Call this half-assed outfit you got going on what you want Gene, but KISS it ain't. Fucking hang it up, already.

Bands that I couldn't even stomach to begin with have pulled this kind of onstage malarkey over the past few years. Even when their bush-bearded leader kicked the bucket, members of the Grateful Dead have pressed on, touring as other bands with equally annoying names as their fans. If I had a time machine, it would have been so much easier to go back in time to arrange a Grateful Dead concert in Jonestown, Guyana on November 18, 1978. And I would *gratefully* serve grape Flavor Aid to the band and their audience.

One advert I saw recently really made me stop and think: a show for a band called *Yoso*. Are you ready for this whopper? *Yoso* features members of the dinosaur rock bands Yes and Toto. It's like someone scientifically mutated pterodactyl wings on a brontosaurus and told it to fly. YOSO? Really? How about *fuck*, no?

I'm getting the feeling that you were starting to think some punk bands were going to fly below the radar here. Wrong. I'll start with the most obvious elephant sitting in the middle of the living room—the Dead Kennedys. You can't have the Ramones without Joey. The Dickies are anything but without Leonard. The Descendents sans Milo is technically ALL, but it still ain't the Descendents. The Candy Snatchers missing their Larry May? Nuh-uh.



CRAIG HORKY

Not too bad for a guy who just celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday last December.

The same is par for the course with the DKs. Get a singer, any great frontman up there with the other three-quarters, but it just doesn't ring true. Same goes for The Misfits. Yeah, yeah, there were those who said that they weren't all that great a live band to begin with, *but* it just isn't the same without Glenn Danzig, especially on the studio records they've done without 'em. Like Biafra and the rest of the DKs, Danzig's involvement with the Misfits seems to be strictly business these days, with a microscopic-to-no chance of there ever being a full-fledged reunion, due to

the litigation battles that left both sides in their own corners. It almost brings to mind the end of Black Flag, who were never to reunite one hundred percent again. This is a shame, when you imagine a three-band, co-heading tour featuring the DKs, Misfits, Black Flag, and assorted guests of the new wave of ass-kickers? Take *that*, OzzFest and Warped Tour.

Will any of the current bands that have graced these pages of *Razorcake* the last ten years fall victim to my above ramblings? Time will only tell. Like those who pay attention to the past, they, too, can make the

choice and not be doomed to repeat it. My two cents aside, there are some really great, newer bands happening now besides the ones who set the bar, and, more importantly than anything, getting off on their records and rocking out to their live sets is what it's all about. Get it while it's hot. When it's stale, it's time to bail.

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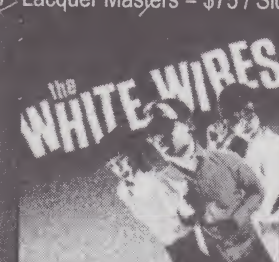
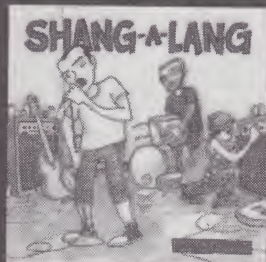
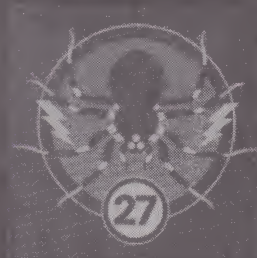
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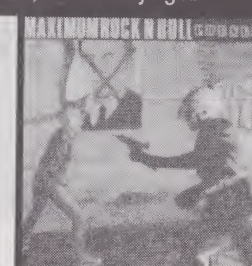
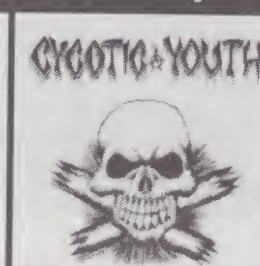
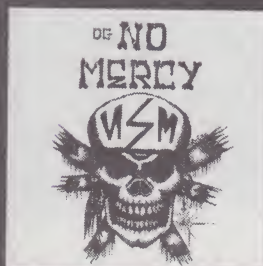
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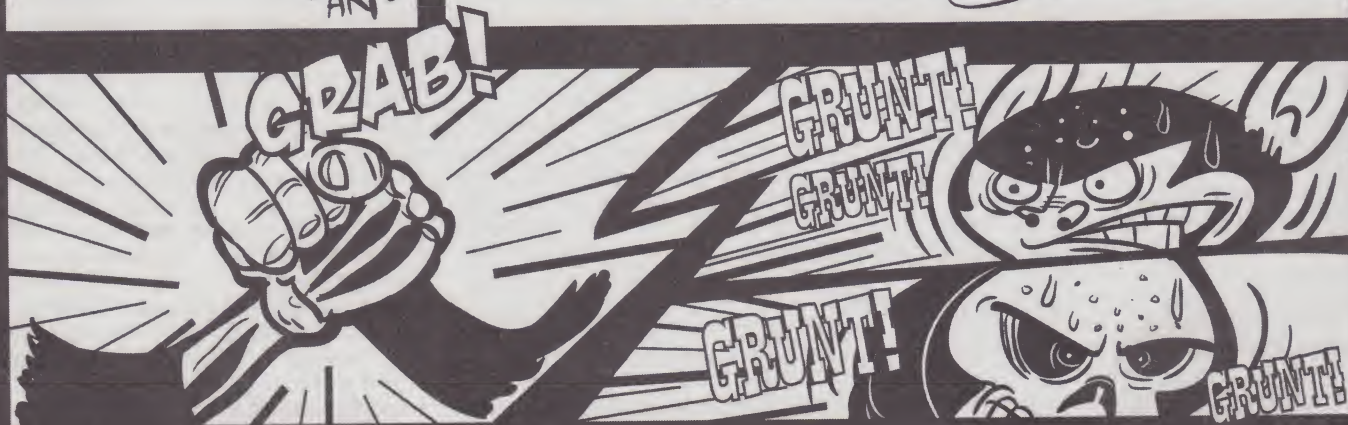
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THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

"It's very Wisconsin. It's very Midwest. It's sort of nuts. I love it."

Ruckus Amongst the Icebergs!

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

Firstly, I would like to bring us back to my last column which ranted on and on about how there is no substantial punk rock scene here in Door County, my home area of Wisconsin. I mentioned how there are no bands, no shows, and no record stores. I brought up how you have to drive a good two hours to Green Bay to see anything like that. Well, just days after I sent that column out I caught wind of a new band up here playing shows and they even just released their new album, on vinyl no less. I stand corrected. Keep your eyes peeled for Abnormal Cattle and their new album *Figure 1*. The only real punk rock that Door County has to offer in a long time!

(Punk rock in Door County? Hurray! – F.F.)

So, here it is the end of January. We just got another six inches of snow this weekend and the temps are back in the single digits, which is better than the below-zero temps we had the last few weeks! In my neck of the woods, winter means everything slows down. Tourism screeches to a halt. People don't leave their homes much. Most folks catch up on their reading and sleep in more often. Aside from the occasional winter festival, life is about as slow as it's gonna get up here right now. One might find one's self watching dust accumulate, counting the cracks in the ceiling, or playing solitaire for hours on end. Some folks will leave the grocery store pretending to forget something, just so they have a reason to come back later as something to do. Things are slow.

Everything slows down, even the Rhythm Chicken tours! This past month I made a point of conducting the slowest, drawn-out Rhythm Chicken tour on record. I made a small tour poster (an index card posted up at the coffee shop I work at that read "Rhythm Chicken January Tour 2011. Jan. 1, Jacksonport. Jan. 29, Washington Island."). These two scheduled gigs comprised the whole tour, and reached from the south end of the county to the northern tip! They were both conducted outside in true northerner fashion! As I type this, I can tell you the tour is complete and it was a much-anticipated success!

[Jacksonport? Why would you play there? What ever happens in that little lakeside sleeper town? – Dr. S.]

Well, Jacksonport is an interesting little collection of buildings on the shore of Lake Michigan. It has a small grocery store, a restaurant, a bar, and a church. The only event that really ever *brings* people to this sleeper town is the annual Polar Bear Plunge. Every New Year's Day for the last twenty-five years, Jacksonport hosts the largest Polar Bear Plunge north of Sheboygan. Last year there were over nine hundred crazy plungers who jumped into the lake (many with hangovers, I'm sure) just for the sake of doing it! It's very Wisconsin. It's very Midwest. It's sort of nuts. I love it.

I had done the Jacksonport plunge once before on January 1 of 1995. That day the temperature was about thirty-eight degrees with no wind. It was cold, but being a seasoned Wisconsinite makes this event seem not too far out there. While spending the last two winters in balmy Nevada, I would share my polar plunge story with my Main Hen, who was skeptical of my claim. I promised her that if she moved to my northwoods habitat, I would brave the icy waters of Lake Michigan again. Well, you know me. If there's a crowd of crazy people doing something crazy in a crazy environment, the Rhythm Chicken can't be too far behind! I decided to give the Polar Bears a little soundtrack for their icy plunge. I would brave the elements and play out on the ice as the hundreds would jump off the ice shelf! *Ruckus amongst the icebergs!*

Dinghole Report #118: Polar Bear Ruckus Rock & Plunge! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #475)

The air temperature was twenty-four. The water temperature was thirty-one. (I know it sounds impossible, but Lake Michigan can be below the freezing point and *still* be liquid!) The wind was howling at about eighteen MPH and the wind-chill factor was at about zero. It wasn't too cold out if you were wearing a jacket, pants, shoes and socks. There were about eight hundred people gathered on the ice shelf, mostly wearing only swimming suits and shoes. There were about two thousand spectators there to witness the crazy eight hundred. There was one drumset near the edge of the ice. All the local news anchors and cameramen were there to document the zaniness. I threw off my winter jacket and pulled my Riverdales shirt over

my head, handing them to my Main Hen as she watched in horror. I sat at my Chickenkit and pulled on the dirty Chickenhead. I felt a chill and wrapped my scarf around my neck and picked up my drumsticks.

An announcer started the countdown as the crowd counted down out loud. I pounded each count with them and then at zero the crowd screamed as Polar Bears began jumping into the frigid January waters of Lake Michigan. I began pounding out a most riotous soundtrack to their icy plunge! My ears were flapping in the frigid lake breeze! People were screaming! Plungers were jumping in, going completely under, and jumping out in near-traumatic shock! I pounded on and on, playing a good five minutes of my Wisconsin ruckus rhythms until most of the Polar Bears had done their thing. Then I had to seal the deal. I owed it to my Main Hen. Was I a man or just a squawking chicken whose cluck is worse than his beak?

I began tearing off the rest of my clothes. I left a pile of garments near my Chickenkit as I marched to the edge of the ice shelf wearing only my Chickenhead, my boxers, and my low-top Polish rip-off Chuckie Taylors... oh yeah, and my scarf because it *was* a little chilly out. With arms raised skyward and drumsticks in hand, I jumped into the water, which felt like frozen pain at first. Then you notice the water is warmer than the air and the whole world seems insane. I marched out till I could dunk myself underwater and renew my membership in the Polar Bear Club. The rest of this winter feels quite warm in comparison.

(Okay, so the Polar Chicken got wet and a little cold. Big deal. I think you're trying to sell out *again* by playing to such a big crowd and bringing your schtick to the newscasters. Do I sense another Rally Rabbit coming on? – F.F.)

[Actually, weren't you supposed to play for the Milwaukee Admirals? We were expecting a little blood on the ice from *that* one. – Dr. S.]

Well, the guy from the Admirals never got back to me and I just sort of forgot about them. I later learned they are (were?) a hockey team of some lesser stature. To tell the truth, I would rather play on the ice shelf at Jacksonport to a bunch of hungover goons jumping into Lake Michigan on New Years Day! Jacksonport probably has more blood on the ice anyway. Really, though, the worst



CHRIS DORN

I jumped into the water, which felt like frozen pain at first. Then you notice the water is warmer than the air and the whole world seems insane.

part of the plunge is the thirty minutes after you leave the water. I was all bundled up and warm, yet I couldn't stop shaking for a good thirty minutes. Nonetheless, this chicken became a Polar Bear yet again!

**Dinghole Report #119:
Frozen Island Ruckus!**
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #476)

It was my fortieth birthday weekend. I wanted to get even further away from the rest of the world than I already am. My Main Hen and I went to the northern tip of this peninsula county and drove aboard the ferry. After a forty-minute ride of iceburg crashing and blizzard conditions, we drove off the ferry and onto Washington Island, the home of the Yellowkid! (But that's another story entirely). Washington Island is pretty quiet in the summer. In the winter, it is dead as dead can be. We got a room at Gibson's West Harbor Resort, which came with its own ice shanty out on the frozen harbor! We sat out in the ice shanty with snacks and drinks, playing cribbage for a few hours! This is living!

On the afternoon of my fortieth birthday, I wanted nothing more than to have the Rhythm

Chicken play his first ever gig on this island in the dead of winter. At 3 P.M. we went to the only area where we knew there would be a random collection of people, the ferry dock. The last ferry of the day arrived, delivering about eight cars to the island. I set up on the ice- and snow-covered dock and began my birthday ruckus! Every car slowed to a halt to take photos and cheer on the wintery ruckus display! The ferry dock workers got a good kick out of the day's surprise entertainment. The last car to drive off the ferry was none other than Bill and Kate from Milwaukee's Rushmor Records! They (and their lovable dog, Iggy) made the long winter trek to the island to help celebrate my big weekend. I was now forty years old. I finally played on Washington Island, in winter no less. The January tour was complete.

(But, Chickenman... aren't you going to address the big ga-.... - F.F.)

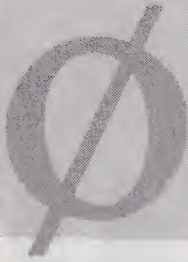
I was getting to that, Francis. The last time I mentioned anything Packer-related in this publication I was honoring Brett Pevre

just after he announced his retirement. Well, he somehow went from Green Bay's most loved hero to a man of questionable word, to a fame-hungry Jet, to a complete butt-munching Minnesota *Viqueen*, to just another sex-scandal celebrity getting dragged through the media. Way to screw it up, Brent. You were well on your way to becoming the next Ray Nitscke, easy as pie, *and you blew it*.

In just six days from me typing this, the Green Bay Packers will be in their first Super Bowl since the 1997 season. Being born and raised in Green Bay, I am backing them two hundred percent. However, to us in Green Bay, Super Bowls still feel like a "new-fangled" concept. Really, NFC vs. AFC? We won twelve championships before there ever was a Super Bowl. Regardless of this game's outcome, my highpoint of the year will surely be the NFC Championship game. Green Bay beating Chicago in *their own shitty alien toilet stadium*. This game was foreseen in the scriptures...and we won.

-Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





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REV. NORB

**"VINCE LOMBARDI
IS THE
ANTI-RAMONE"**

IT'S THE END OF THE STEELERS, YOU KNOW IT ((AND I FEEL FINE)) ((I HOPE))

My column is way overdue. I should have submitted it days ago, but the Super[®]Bowl[™] is tomorrow, and THE GREEN BAY SONOFABITCHING PACKERS are in it. I cannot be expected to successfully ponder and muse about some ethereal punk rock triviality when i have nothing to write about other than FOOTBALL, which isn't punk rock at all. Nor should it be. In point of fact, as i stewed and stalled over finding a suitable topic for this column—i.e., "one that wasn't football" (which, the careful observer will note, was never to be found)—a young lad suggested that i write a column about "how the Green Bay Packers are the most punk NFL franchise of all time." Unfortunately, while i appreciate the whippersnapper's heartfelt sentiment, i really don't see the Packers as being the most "punk" anything of all time. FOOTBALL IS INHERENTLY UN-PUNK, and if it's not inherently un-punk, then it is un-inherently un-punk or something. But it's un-punk. I'm sure of it. I mean, when Riff Randall and the Ramones blew up Vince Lombardi High in "Rock & Roll High School," did the portrait of Vince on the wall grow a Mohawk or leather jacket in a synergistic show of support for The Cause[™]? No. No he did not. If you'll recall, towards the end of the movie, the portrait of Vince was shown WITH FINGERS IN EARS, in a surely-vain attempt to block out the squalling din of "Do You Wanna Dance," et al. They didn't name the school after George Halas of the Bears, or Knute Rockne of Notre Dame, ((or Ronald Reagan of fake Notre Dame if you count the movie he was in about Knute Rockne))—the autocratic authority figure chosen to represent the forces of all things un-Ramonely was VINCE FUCKING LOMBARDI of the GREEN BAY PACKERS. By definition, then, VINCE LOMBARDI IS THE ANTI-RAMONE, and the Packers, by extension, are ((or should be, on a good day)) the anti-punks. Further ammo for this argument can be found in Lombardi's claim that "*Our society, at the present time, seems to have sympathy only for the misfit, the ne'er-do-well, the maladjusted, the criminal, the loser. It's time to stand up for the doer, the achiever, the one who sets out to do something and does it.*" So, if i read this correctly, not only does Vince hate the Ramones, but he is also not fond of the Misfits, the Ne'er-Do-Wells,

and the Criminals! Well PARLEZ-VOUS, FUCK YOU!!! The Packers are arguably the LEAST punk franchise in all of professional sports, except for the Dallas Cowboys, who are obviously pretty much the least punk thing in the world, ever. Then again, Bret Starr, the son of Lombardi's MVP quarterback Bart Starr, played guitar for the early '80s Green Bay punk band the Tyrants, whose "Hard To Get"/"Attitude" 45 sells for like \$200 to the KBD crowd, but does that actually impart punkness to the Packers as a result, or does it just further the un-punkness of the Packers by propping them up as the willful bastions of authority ((parental and otherwise)) against which punk must ever rail? Plus wouldn't this all be cancelled out by ((later Packers quarterback)) Don Majkowski playing guitar onstage with Poison on "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" anyway? And Brent Favre might have been in the movie "There's Something About Mary," which featured jacking off and Jonathan Richman, therefore has to at least be tangentially punk, but Cameron Diaz, the movie's titular Mary, was just in that Green Hornet movie, which was pretty cool, except for that scene where the Packers fan gets shot after Chudnofsky/Bloodnofsky puts the bounty on the Green Hornet's head, and i bought that new Greenhornes album after hearing the song "Saying Goodbye" in the movie's end credits, and it cost sixteen bucks and really wasn't very good at all, so how the hell can anybody say the Packers are "punk" when i'm sitting here with some shitty album with a die-cut leopard on the cover because the guy from "Inglourious Basterds" had a Packer fan shot in a quest to eliminate the alter ego of Mary's employer??? I DON'T CARE IF JERRY HARRISON OF THE MODERN LOVERS *WAS* FROM WISCONSIN, I'M CALLING BULLSHIT ON THIS WHOLE AFFAIR!!! Then again, in all didactical fairness, the claim was never made that the Packers were PUNK; only that they were the PUNKEST among their peers. Presumably, it wouldn't take a whole hell of a lot of punkness to graduate at the head of the class with that lot—therefore, the possibility remains that whatever meager scraps of punkness to which the Packers can lay claim might be just enough to out-scrap the other thirty teams in the league ((Dallas being eliminated right off the bat as a given,

as well as a community service)). This begs the question: Who's punker than the Pack? Da Bears? Not hardly. The Bears GOT punked by the Packers. There's a difference ((although i will freely admit that Jay Cutler does meet the definition of "punk" in the Donny The Punk sense of the word, i.e., the guy who has got to give the blowjobs whilst in stir)). There is also the not-small matter of the Super Bowl Shuffle with which the Bears' punkly consciences must contend. I think i need say no more. The Raiders? You'd think so; then again, i had a free ticket to go see Body Count once, and they played behind this HUGE-ass banner that looked like a big Oakland Raiders logo, except on the top it said "SYNDICATE" instead of "RAIDERS," for whatever evil demonic gangsta purposes i cannot say. This makes the Raiders far more rap-guys-attempting-to-play-hard-rock than punk, IMO, and removes them from the discussion ((further, that band was, in all honesty, pretty bad. Midway thru the performance i had to stifle the urge to walk onstage, put my arm around Ice-T, and whisper "yo, homes—whitey don't play drum solos no more" in his ear)). Or, perish forbid, what about the Steelers? You'd THINK the Steelers would be punk—you know, hard-hittin', workin'-class joes who apparently can only afford a logo on one side of their helmets—but the sad, sad fact of the matter is that virtually one hundred percent of Steeler Nation is ADAMANT that the first nine of the Packers' WORLD RECORD TWELVE NFL CHAMPIONSHIPS "don't count," because they predated the advent of the Super[®]Bowl[™] in 1967, and this is a sad, sad thing: Not for the Packers, who own a WORLD RECORD TWELVE NFL CHAMPIONSHIPS* ((*at the time of this writing)), but for the Steelers fans themselves. To claim that the first half of the NFL's history—a history literally paved with the broken and mangled bodies of flimsy-helmeted, often low-paid working joes—the type of work-a-day schmuck we all imagined Steeler Nation would embrace— "doesn't count" simply because YOUR TEAM SUCKED ASS FOR THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE AND NEVER WON A DAMN THING UNTIL THE SEVENTIES EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE AROUND SINCE 1933 AND HAD AMPLE TIME TO DO SOMETHING OTHER



MARCOS SIREF

TRADITION and HISTORY are NOT SOMETHING TO WHICH YOU CAN ARBITRARILY ASSIGN A STARTING POINT JUST BECAUSE IT MAKES YOU LOOK BETTER.

THAN SUCK SHIT DURING THOSE FOUR DECADES OF SUCKING SHIT—is shameful indeed. Steeler fans' refusal to acknowledge the NFL's pre-SuperTMBowlTM era—even though that era is infinitely more working class, more no-frills, more tough guy, more small-market, more kick-in-the-nuts-on-a-muddy-field, more everything-you-heard-about-Pittsburgh-but-were-afraid-to-ask, more just goddamn REAL than the media-encrusted, zillion-dollar, Jerry-Jones-facelift SuperTMBowlTM pay-nine-hundred-dollars-for-a-parking-spot era is tragic. TRAGIC I SAY!!! For SHAME, Pittsburgh!! For SHAME!!! A Green Bay Packer victory in SuperTMBowlTM XLV, then, becomes IMPERATIVE—not for purposes of validating regional or sociological character, as a Packers-Jets tilt would be ((i.e., workin' class hicks vs. city slickers))—but for purposes of establishing that TRADITION and HISTORY are NOT SOMETHING TO WHICH YOU CAN ARBITRARILY ASSIGN A STARTING POINT JUST BECAUSE IT MAKES YOU LOOK BETTER. You don't GET to pretend the '30s and '40s and '50s and '60s never happened just because you sucked and someone else didn't. You just don't. A Steelers victory is a victory for Big Brother and memory holes, camouflaged in the guise of the working

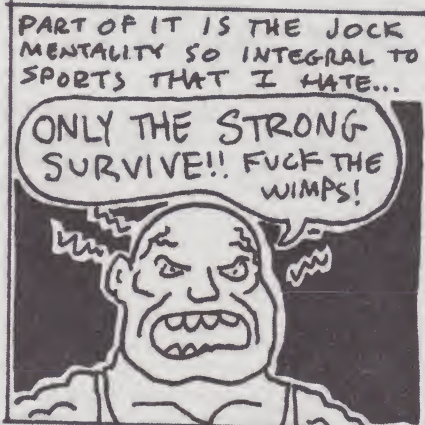
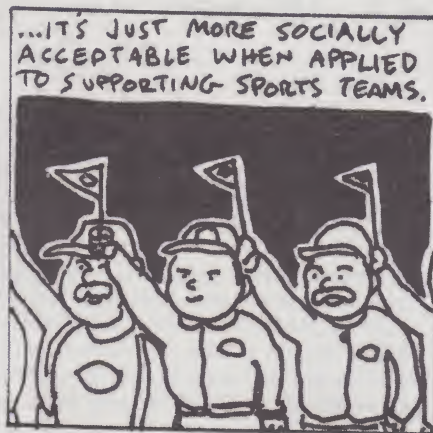
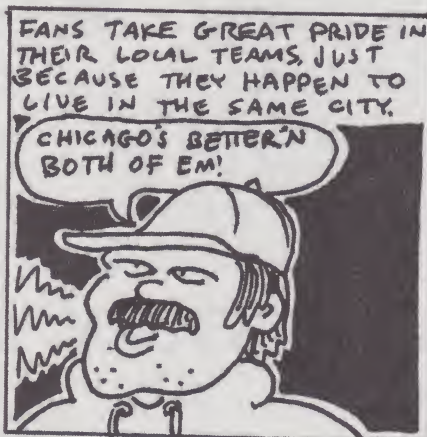
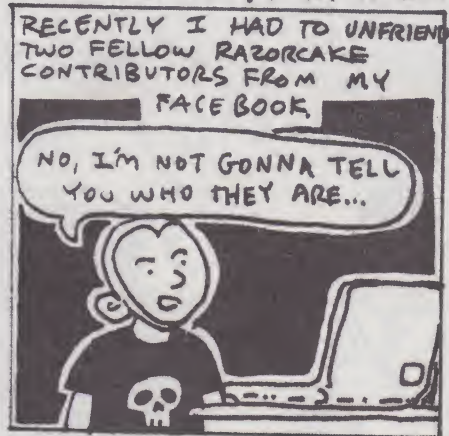
class. A Packers victory is a victory for cavemen and gin joints and newsprint, camouflaged in the guise of cavemen and gin joints and newsprint. As such, me choosing my lucky shirt for the game becomes THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE MILLENNIUM. HUH. For the last thirteen years of Packers history, i have always worn my "lucky shirts": A blue sweatshirt over a yellow Packers t-shirt. This is what i wore for the Packers' last Super Bowl victory. Problem is, i've worn these exact same shirts for the interceding thirteen years of heartbreaking bullshit losses ((4th & 26th anyone?)), and it's been strongly suggested to me that my shirts' kung fu is FUCKING WEAK and COSTING US TROPHIES. I need a new lucky shirt, and, as indicated previously, THE FATE OF THE WORLD depends on this. Now, old farts among you may remember the '90s, and my friendly ((?)) rivalry with one Benjamin Weasel therein. My band toured with Weasel's band, the Riverdales, which led to a number of situations where, to my great chagrin, Weasel's lucky number—27—kept trumping my lucky number, 8. In point of fact, Weasel's 27-mania essentially linked that number to the Riverdales permanently. I had my new lucky shirt all picked out for the game: The Angry Samoans "1962 Packers: Greatest NFL Team Ever" jersey i picked up whilst selling Samoans merch in Oakland last year.

I was all set to run with this, when my friend pointed out—helpfully, he thought—that Bart Starr was twenty-seven when he won his first SuperTMBowlTM. Brett Favre was also twenty-seven when he won his first SuperTMBowlTM. Current Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers is—you guessed it—twenty-seven. SO! FOR THE FATE OF ALL HUMANITY, MY QUESTION IS THIS: Should i wear my Riverdales shirt with the big "27" on it, to milk the cosmic 27 mojo that is obviously in play here, even though the Riverdales are fans of the Packers' arch-rivals, the Bears, and the shirt is in THE OPPOSING TEAM'S COLORS, or do i try to ignore the cosmic signs of 27-dom and wear the shirt which i originally intended to wear? IT'S A TRAP!!! IT'S PSYCHIC SABOTAGE!!! WEASEL PLANNED THIS SCHEME FIFTEEN YEARS AGO BECAUSE I MADE FUN OF "BARK LIKE A DOG" AND NOW IT'S BEARING FRUIT!!! THE FATE OF THE FREE WORLD RESTS ON THIS SHIRT, AND WEASEL HAS ONCE AGAIN FUCKED ME UP!!! I'M SO CONFUUUUUUUSED!!!

Well, if you see me watching the game Sunday, say hi. I guess i'll be the naked guy.

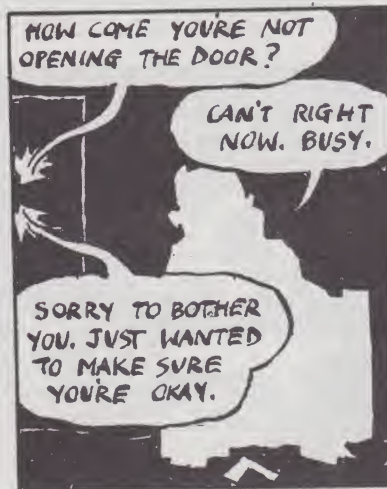
Love
—Norb

MY FORTY-FIFTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT



WON TO BLAME NOW

BY KIYOSHI NAKA **KNOCK!**
KNOCK!





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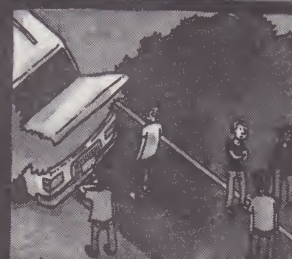
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TURNSTILE COMIX



WITNESS A PUNK BAND'S PERILOUS JOURNEY INTO THE DEPTHS OF HELL... SOUTH HAVEN, KANSAS!



THE WORLD'S WORST HOUSE-GUEST LEAVE HIS DISGUSTING, DRUNKEN MARK ON THE WORLD!



Minneapolis' Slow Death are a veritable punk rock super group. Comprised of ex-members of such luminaries as Pretty Boy Thorson and the Falling Angels, the Ergs, and the Rest of Us, these gentlemen play a familiar style of melancholy, country-tinged midwestern punk of the exceptional quality you'd expect delivered from such seasoned veterans.

And deliver they do! This 7" features four brand new Slow Death songs so goddamn good it'll make your parents get back together!

Meanwhile, cartoonist Mitch Clem (Nothing Nice to Say, My Stupid Life) and his watercoloring cohort Nation of Amanda present an original, 45-page comic book illustrating some of Slow Death/Falling Angels frontman Jesse "Swan" Thorson's craziest road stories!

It's a team-up for the ages as punk rock band and punk rock cartoonist join forces to try and stop the evil goat-faced demon known as you being bored!

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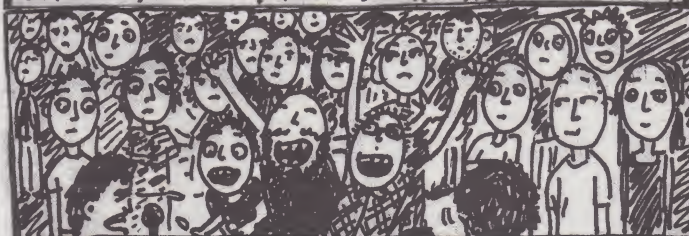
BITE the CACTUS

BY
ADRIAN
CHI

"SUCCESS IS WHEN..."

-2011-

YOUR MUSIC MAKES PEOPLE IN THE CROWD
DANCE/SHOUT/PUSH EACH OTHER AROUND,



EVEN IF THE ONLY PEOPLE DANCING ARE THE
PEOPLE YOU HANG OUT WITH EVERY DAY.

YOU GO HOME WITH ALL THE GEAR
YOU BROUGHT TO THE SHOW,



EVEN IF IT'S ALL BROKEN.

SOMEONE IS INSPIRED TO PLAY MUSIC
AFTER HEARING YOUR BAND,



EVEN IF THE MUSIC THEY PLAY IS
SOMETHING TOTALLY DIFFERENT.

YOU HEAR YOUR GRANDPA/MA
SINGING ONE OF YOUR SONGS,



EVEN IF THEY HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT THE WORDS ARE.

YOU'RE INVITED TO PLAY SHOWS WITH
BANDS YOU LIKE AND RESPECT,



EVEN IF THE ONLY PEOPLE THERE ARE
PEOPLE IN THE OTHER BANDS.

YOU GET TO SPEND A WEEK
TRAVELING AND PLAYING HOUSE SHOWS,



EVEN IF THE FLOOR YOU SLEEP ON IS
THE SAME FLOOR YOU PARTIED ON.

SOMEONE PUBLISHES AN INTERVIEW
WITH YOUR BAND IN THEIR FANZINE,



EVEN IF THEY'RE YOUR ROOMMATE AND THE
ZINE'S DISTRIBUTION BARELY LEAVES THE HOUSE.

YOU SURPRISE YOURSELF,



EVEN IF IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T
EXPECT ALL THAT MUCH.



SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

"I'm defeating fears, so forward I went into a room of pits filled with bones."

Fears Conquered and Faced: Peru Part I

The sun had outrun us even though we had left Los Angeles at 11 A.M. As the pilot's voice crackled over the intercom that we were starting our decent into Bogotá, I took a quick glance out the window. I could see the lights of the city. I was happy to be on the ground again, even though we were getting right back on another plane to fly to Lima. I was even happy to see the armed guard with the drug-sniffing beagle as we exited the plane. That's right, folks, I decided to pack up my fears, pull them out one by one, and attempt to defeat them. First off, I started with leaving the country by agreeing to go to Peru. The most difficult fear was that of flying. I was going to ride six different planes as I hopped about South America.

We arrived in Lima, the capitol of Peru, at 12:30 A.M. eastern time and after going through customs, were greeted by the nicest of men holding a sign that read Hornberger. That's right, I'm a big star in Peru with a sign and a car waiting as I get off the plane. The driver, on the other hand, had nothing to say. He just drove through the city streets on the coastal side of the city to our hotel in Mira Flores, which is Lima's high-rent district.

The next day we woke early to get breakfast because we had to meet our tour group and get the info for how our week would be planned. The group was ten people from all over the states. Shortly after the info meeting, we all loaded onto a bus and we went out on a tour of Lima.

First, we went to "Huaca Pucllana," a pre-Spanish pyramid belonging to a native culture around 400 to 700 A.D. The structure was built with little clay bricks. We also got to play with the sacred Peruvian hairless dog at the pyramid. The dog looks like a Doberman with no hair, just black skin like an elephant's. We then jumped back in the bus and shipped across town to the central plaza, with views of the court system and the presidential palace. From the square we walked down a street and through Lima's oldest bar to the San Francisco monastery.

In Peru, there are many squares and each one has a catholic church nearby, maybe even two. So we toured the monastery and this is where I conquered my next fear. They took us down into the catacombs. The group disappeared into a hole in the wall that was maybe five and a half feet high and sloped down to the catacombs. I looked at the hole—

and with my stomach starting to churn—I pondered how tight it was down there, but I bent my six-foot-five frame and in I went. I entered a large room with many columns but only a few inches' space above my head. I'm under the church, it was steamy, and I was starting to panic. "Do I bail out now or go forward?" I'm defeating fears, so forward I went through another small passage and into a room of pits filled with bones—lots and lots of bones. This is where they bury the dead and it seemed like they had been doing it for a while. I don't take pictures because they told us we couldn't and because it seemed a little sacrilegious.

All right, two fears conquered. Now it's time for lunch.

The bus returned us to the hotel and out we went into Mira Flores to look for some grub. This is where I conquer another small fear. At the meeting in the morning, they had informed us that with water, only drink it out of a sealed bottle; with food, be sure it is cooked well and the place doesn't look seedy. So we went to this chicken place that my wife says is Peru's equivalent of El Pollo Loco. It turns out though that this place has the best fried potatoes on the planet. In Peru, every meal is served with steak fries. I don't know what they did to them at this place, but they were mouth watering. The only thing I could come up with was the oil these suckers sat in because there was no trace of any seasoning, even salt. I could have just had my meals in fries, though the chicken was also good. After lunch, we walked around, did a little shopping, and then went back to the hotel to sack out because we were getting up early to take a plane to Cuzco.

Day three had us up early on a bus taking the beach route back to the airport. We arrived in Cuzco about an hour and a half after leaving Lima. As soon as we got our bags put away, we were out walking the streets of Cuzco. From our hotel we walked several blocks up to the main plaza in search of the church with the giant painting of The Last Supper, in which Christ and the apostles dine on guinea pig, not fish. While we're walking up, I was really struggling to catch a breath so we took a lot of breaks. The altitude was taking affect. Cuzco is a beautiful city of many squares with flowers and statues. After many hours of going through churches and shops—and Peruvian pizza for lunch—we

headed back down to our hotel. We had dinner and then went to bed early because on day four we got up at 2 A.M., to get on the bus to Machu Picchu.

The bus ride out to the train depot was quiet, mostly because I think we were all still asleep. The bus arrived in a small town and wound through tight cobblestone streets to finally arrive at the train depot. The slow-moving train ran along a river that wound through the valleys that became more jungle-like as we neared the base city below Machu Picchu. The trees along the river were filled with orchids and the view outside the train window turned slowly from trees and shrubs to trees, shrubs, ferns, and vines.

After a couple of hours, we arrived at the base city below the Inca ruins. We all loaded onto buses for the hellish ride up the mountain. These big buses drove switchback dirt roads that are tight and they pass buses going down that give the feeling of the wheels coming off of the road. We finally reached the front gates atop the park. We got our passes from our group leader and we met our tour guide. We walked through the gates and around the side of a hill. There, stretched out just past the guard towers and shrouded in the mist of the clouds, lay the Inca palace known as Machu Picchu. It was magnificent.

For the next couple of hours, we toured the temple of the sun, king and queens chambers, guard towers, temple of the condor, and more. After the tour was over, we went back to the main gate to get both lunch and a stamp in our passports from Machu Picchu. After lunch we went back into the park to explore on our own. We climbed to the top to take the postcard picture of the grounds and the mountain just beyond. We petted the llamas, which are nasty animals that spit green globs the size of pool balls onto unsuspecting visitors.

Machu Picchu has two horrible trails for thrill seekers to climb. The first leads from the grounds up to that mountain one sees on postcards. They only let four hundred people a day go. One person who braved it said, "If you even have an inkling fear of heights, you don't cross the bridge to the path. In 2009, three people died on it and one was a park guide." The other path is on the opposite side and goes up to the temple of the sun. I don't



JACKIE RUSTED

TWO fears conquered. NOW it's time for lunch.

like heights so when the park guide asked if I was going up I said, "Hell no." He goaded me into it by telling me it was wide and would only be an hour round trip. I was there to conquer fears, so I went.

For the most part, the trail is wide and the growth on the side hides the view of the drop. Very near the top, the trail narrows, the shrubs disappear, and the side of the mountain juts out so one has to walk slanted outward. Needless to say, I failed to conquer the fear of heights and, after several minutes clutching the side of the mountain, I was able to descend back down. When we got back down to the main area, the sun had come out and the grounds were even more stunning. I walked all over Machu Picchu, took over a

hundred pictures, and still feel I could have done more.

The best part was the cutout terraces of green grass that flow down the sides of the mountain and are very defining of the site. We were told that they were for growing crops for food, but it is my belief that, since this was thought to be the resort of the king, these terraces were actually tee areas for the king and his playing partners to practice their golf by hitting balls down into the valley below. I can just see the king with three caddies: one holding the bag, one giving him clubs, and one teeing balls up for him. The balls would be some round fruit core or seed that fell off the surrounding foliage.

At 4:30, we piled back onto a bus, crazily drove back down the mountain, ate dinner,

and waited around until 7:00 to get back on the train, which took us back to a bus that drove us back to our hotel.

Next issue I'll give a report on the second leg of the vacation: the floating islands of Lake Titicaca.

Before I say goodbye, I would like to say fuck you to the guy who took up three spaces in the parking lot of the Cerritos Target during the last week of Christmas shopping with his four-by truck. Way to think of the plight of other holiday shoppers, you egotistical dickhead.

—Gary Hornberger



SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADDY TIGHT PANTS

"I knew that in America, justice was both glorious and slow."

American Patriot: Part One

Greetings patriots, both dutiful and lax! Put down your copy of the Federalist Papers, and crank up the "Star Spangled Banner!" It's time to talk American!

Question: What is the greatest gift our nation received from its founding fathers? The separation of powers? A renewed commitment to kill Native Americans? No, and no!

This is not a Montessori School! There is only one correct answer. Libraries. Where else can you publicly access free documents? Lots of places, but the only place you can access an American library is in America. Thank you, Benjamin Franklin—and goodbye, for the rest of this column will not concern you!

Moving on, what is the second greatest gift our nation received from its founding fathers? A Mind Spiders 7" in every pot? Would that this were the case! Would that this sentence construction were used more often!

The answer? Jury duty. This is the point where I ridicule you for sighing and shrugging and saying things like, "But that takes *days* sometimes. You can't get out of it! It's so annoying! I hate America!"

But if you belong to the "devoted *Razorcake* reader" demographic, statistics show that you routinely spend not just days, but *months*, doing little more than sitting in your bedroom getting drunk and listening to Tiltwheel. To be sure, this is a noble pursuit. But dear punk, could you spare a day for America?

Let's get to the point. I have wanted to be on a jury for as long as I've known that juries existed—knowledge I first gleaned from the Nickelodeon show *Kid's Court*, which is exactly what it sounds like, except that it ended with a unique twist—a "sound-off" where kids in the audience shared stories of something unfair that happened to them and all of the kids would scream, "Unfair!" Juvenile justice!

Although my collection of Black Flag and Minor Threat records grew as I got older, my commitment to jury duty did not waver! Like most punks and/or most Americans, I was employed in several vital sectors, including breakfast cereal amusement park attendant and Ground Round waitress. Somehow, I rationalized, I would be able to put aside these duties if the United States called upon me to

make the ultimate sacrifice and assemble in a room to judge my fellow man!

And so, I waited. I watched as unpatriotic friends were summoned for jury duty and made various excuses to get out of it. "Traitors," I muttered. "Let the wrath of James Madison be unleashed upon them." At that moment, I realized that I didn't know whether the founding fathers actually created the jury system—and I made a solemn vow to never research the matter.

The years came and went, which is to say that time continued to move in a chronological fashion. This is somewhat unfortunate, as any *Back to the Future* fan can tell you, but that did not matter. What mattered was that I was not winning the jury lottery. I sank into a deep depression.

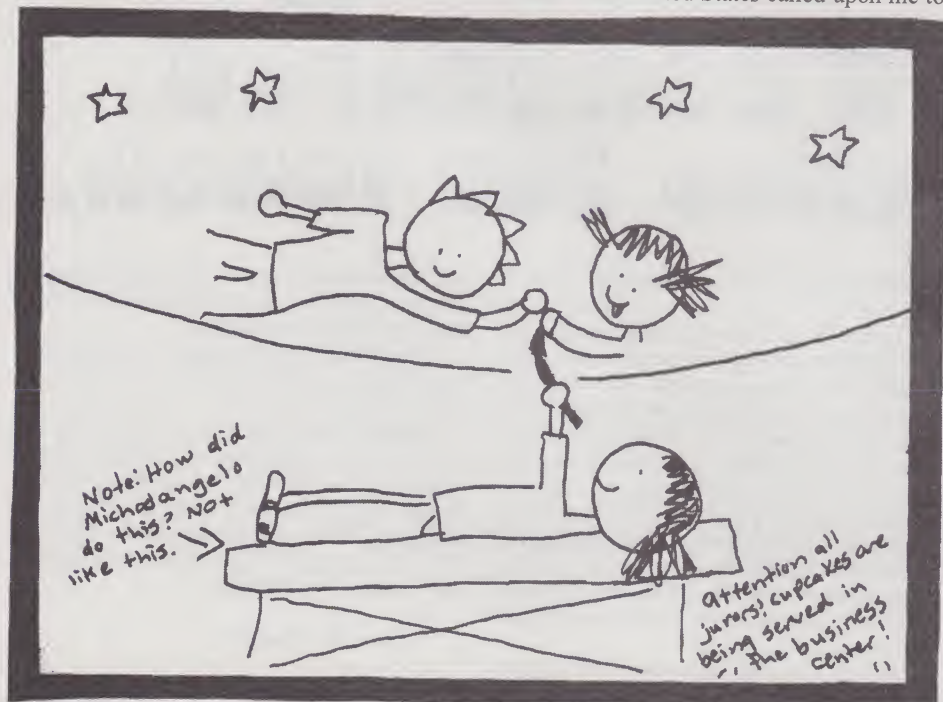
And then I received an official letter in the mail. Could it be? I carried the letter into my bedroom in Minneapolis, climbed up onto my creaky loft bed, and tore it open. My heart rate, already quickened by coffee and Lucky Charms, spiked sharply.

I had been summoned for a federal grand jury, the most sought after jury experience, a requirement that could last months and might even involve examining the financial transactions of and/or killings by mobsters! Thank you, George Washington, thank you!

And then, in a disturbing and tragic twist, I realized that I had been summoned in the wrong state—Massachusetts, where I had recently graduated from college. As a result, I was ineligible to serve and, with great pain, had to return the necessary paperwork to the federal courts. I wanted to include a post-it note saying something along the lines of, "If you could put in a good word for me...." But, overcome by grief, I forgot.

I began to harbor dark thoughts. My chances of ever getting selected again had plummeted. Most people, I said to myself on many a lonely night, never even get chosen for jury duty once. What are the chances that I could be chosen again? Low, very low.

Fortunately, as it turns out, I lacked a basic understanding of math or statistics. My chances had not changed. I learned this a few weeks ago when I received a letter from my local district court. I was scheduled to report at the courthouse in three weeks, at 8 a.m. on a Monday morning. I rejoiced.

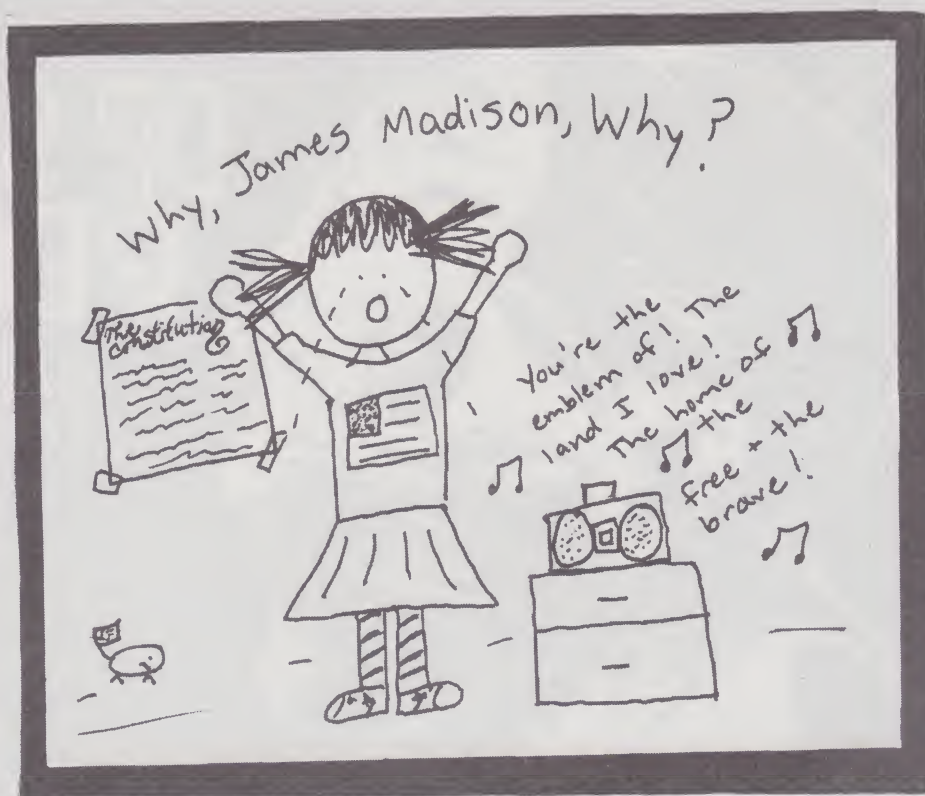


I got a ride to the building that morning, armed with coffee, my computer, and a copy of Steinbeck's *East of Eden*—for I knew that in America, justice was both glorious and slow.

The jury room was packed with about two hundred members of America's great melting pot—elderly white people, middle-aged white people, and about ten non-white people. Several television screens flashed silent messages about the great patriotic duty we were about to fulfill.

The walls, on the other hand, were covered with xeroxed newspaper articles about people who had failed to show up for jury duty and had been fined up to \$1,000. One article, taped next to a dry erase board where you would sign out for a bathroom break, told the story of a wayward juror who was sent to jail for thirty days. The paragraph detailing his punishment had been starred and underlined with a blue highlighter.

Everyone was complaining. Everyone had an extreme hardship. Everyone was shocked and appalled that they would have to spend up to two weeks in this room, which was cruelly equipped with items such as games, hundreds of magazines, wireless internet, free phones, and a separate business center where jurors could plug in their computers and work in cubicles on whatever critical



The funny thing about America is that Americans loudly proclaim their love for our freedoms, and yet, when they are asked to participate in a process critical to our democracy, they complain.

tasks they would have otherwise neglected. Oh, and you could send faxes for free, too.

It was paradise. I imagined spending months, even years, in this environment. I would finally tackle the complete works of John Dos Passos. I would edit my sister's dissertation. Maybe I would learn chess. In this room, I thought, were the makings of a second Renaissance.

I had already considered all possible juror scenarios. In my county, jurors can be held for two weeks waiting (from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to be assigned a case. You could be called up as part of a potential jury at any time. If you were rejected during jury selection, you would be sent back down to the jury room to await another trial. But if the number of cases dropped, and as a result, the need for jurors declined, you could be sent home early. This was the complicated

scenario that everyone in the room was most excited about—except me.

The funny thing about America (or one of the many extremely annoying things about America) is that Americans loudly proclaim their love for our freedoms, and yet, when they are asked to participate in a process critical to our democracy, they complain. Yes, I am beginning to sound like a high school civics teacher: A high school civics teacher who is right.

I decided the best scenario (one that would give me plenty of time in the jury holding area and also be assigned an interesting and very long case) would be for me to be rejected from a jury early on, and then sent back to the pool for a week or so, and then be assigned a case on the very last day of my two-week assignment. Ideally, that case would take months to resolve.

If this were a Choose Your Own Adventure book, you would now have the option of selecting from the following: "Choice #1.) Maddy Tight Pants gets pulled for a case involving a prominent musician. (Go to page 72) Choice #2.) She is visited by a magical unicorn who transports her to a parallel "cloud jury" system, where she reigns as a juror for eternity (Go to page 114). Choice #3.) Surprise me. (See page 142.)"

What will happen? You'll have to wait for American Patriot: Part Two. (Yes, I just tricked you into buying the next issue of *Razorcake*.)

Yours in America,
—Maddy Tight Pants





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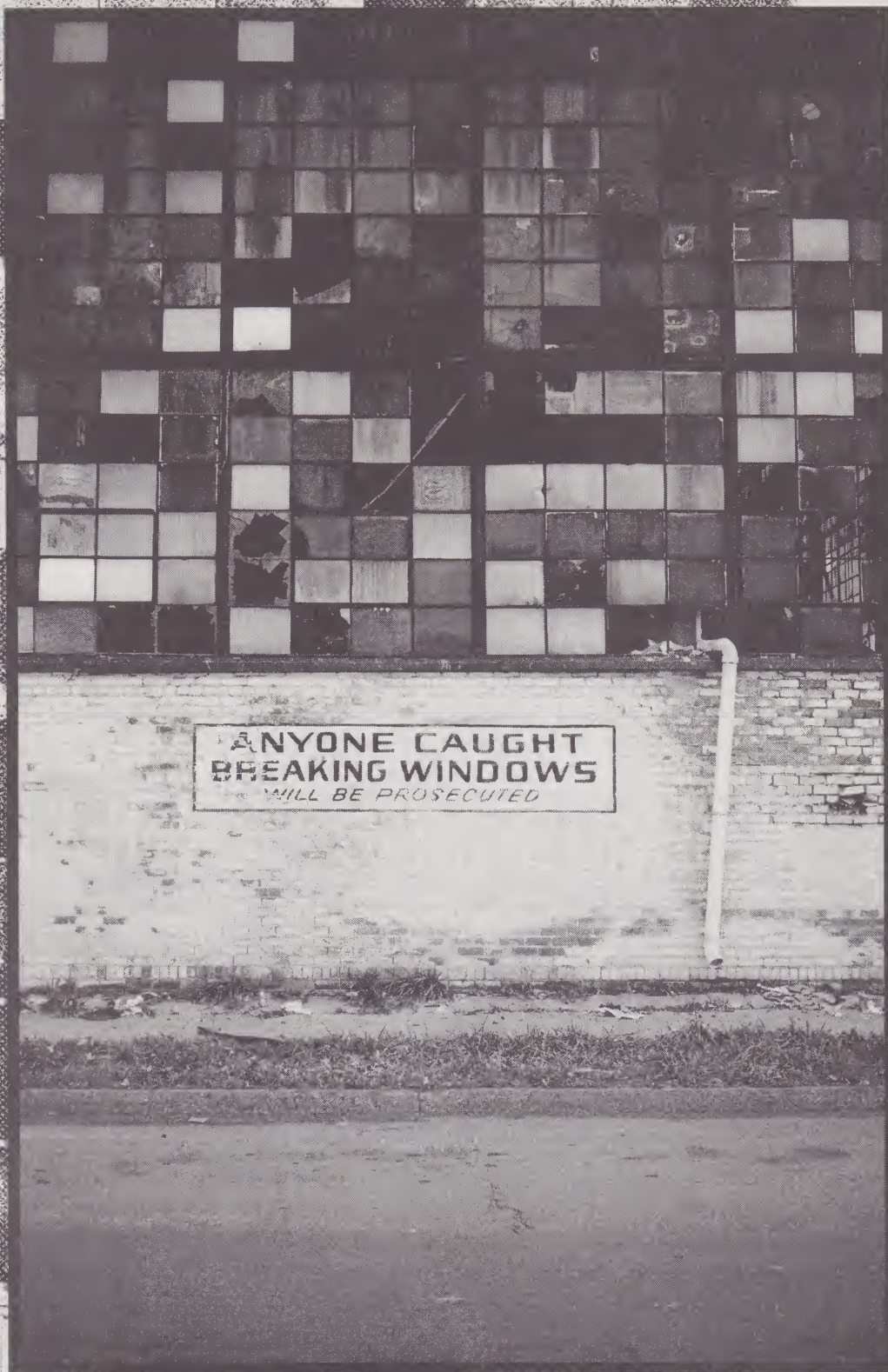
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Dan Monick's Photo Page

Detroit, MI, November 2010

the World/Inferno Friendship Society

The newest collection of orchestral rants from the world's premier gang of anarchist glamour ghouls.

With a full horn section, baby grand piano, punk guitar, 5 string bass and dueling male and female vocals-freedom fightin; the punk-as-world-music cult channels Phillip K. Dick, Kurt Weill and Jonathan Richman on their 13th release.

Pushing boundaries, grudges, genres, heartstrings and parole conditions from the cow-punk thump of track "Disarming Smile" to the heartbreaking samba of "13 Years Without Peter King;" Anarchy and The Ecstasy shows Inferno with a refined songwriting style and virtuosic playing. Plus the attitude you've come to expect from the kids in "I Am Sick of People Being Sick of My Shit".

For people who like: dressing up and breaking things, red wine, sustainable rebellion, stage-diving and a better world.



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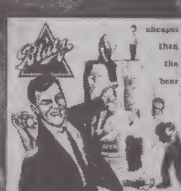
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Shanty Cheryl's Photo Page
Fleshies at Babe's Warehouse, Long Beach, CA

Behind Bullying:

Bullying is all the rage these days. And denizens of the punk scene are no strangers to bullying. I wasn't the first kid to get punched, spit on, and called faggot on a daily basis at school for listening to punk rock and sporting a crazy haircut—and I sure as hell wasn't the last. I can't say that bullying was the only factor that contributed to my decision to drop out of high school, but it helped. I hated just about every second I spent there.

Years later, when I was working in group homes with abused and neglected kids, I started to see how unchecked bullying can literally destroy people and how emotional abuse is at the root of most problems we associate with the erosion of our society: violence, drug addiction, poverty, narcissism, and depression. We create those crises by allowing abusers (or bullies) to create defective human beings. That revelation was corroborated when a writer friend turned me on to the work of Andrew Vachss.

Andrew has written more than twenty books, mostly hardcore crime novels that explore issues related to child abuse. By day, he's an attorney who represents children and youth exclusively and has been in the business of protecting kids for the better part of forty years. His new book, *Heart Transplant*, is the culmination of his life's work.

When I received an advance copy of *Heart Transplant* in the mail, I wasn't sure exactly what the hell I was looking at. Created in collaboration with artist Frank Caruso, the one-hundred-page, 10" X 13" mix of art and prose tells the tale of a kid named Sean, who is taken in by a tough old guy called Pop after the kid's abusers are shot to death. When I started to flip through it I was stunned first by Frank's artwork: urgent, raw, and occasionally brutal—not what one would expect from an illustrator who tends to the legacies of classic comic characters such as Betty Boop and Popeye.

The story itself is an emotional gut-punch, anchored at the end with an essay by Zak Mucha, a clinical social worker out of Chicago. Zak runs a street-level mental health team that works with people suffering from severe psychiatric and substance-abuse disorders. His essay is a treatise on bullying, its impact on victims, and its toll on society at large.

Heart Transplant is a work of compassionate activism, made unique by the three-pronged method of its delivery. It doesn't tell you who to vote for. It doesn't ask for money. Instead, it blows up culturally-accepted perceptions of bullying, sifts through the debris, and uses what's still intact to show the cause of human dysfunction and the solution. Ubiquitous YouTube clips of teenage assaults and Dr. Phil segments with tearful victims can't begin to show life through the eyes of oppressed youth as vividly as this book. But if you talk to Andrew, Frank, and Zak, raising awareness about bullying is just a part of the plan—they're hoping more people will see how bullying affects *everyone* and actually do something about it.

An Interview with Andrew Vachss, Frank Caruso, and Zak Mucha

Interview by Trey Bundy
Illustrations by Frank Caruso



Trey: It seems like you've been working toward this book since you started writing.

Andrew: The concept that if you're bigger and stronger, you get to make others do as you wish, is at the root of every single thing I hate. So, absolutely, that's right. Our cultural software is mis-coded. We don't have a problem with bullying.

Trey: Most people don't think of themselves as bullies.

Andrew: Well, most people aren't.

Trey: But on a societal level are more people complicit?

Andrew: Yes. Have you ever watched one of those high school reunion shows? So-called reality TV, which means it's scripted within an inch of its life? There's always a wimpy

guy who now comes back: "You remember the time you stuffed me in my locker? Ha ha ha." Sitcoms constantly have bullying-type situations that are meant to be seen as funny. So, yeah, I think we not only tolerate it, we reinforce it. There's no question that we have a world that's based on the principal that power legitimizes.

Trey: So bullying has permeated our culture?

Zak: It's hard to see any part of the culture where it doesn't exist, where people don't believe might makes right. In punk, there are so many different subcategories, like skinheads. You know there are non-racist skinheads, and people are really shocked when I tell them about a black skinhead. All these guys wanted something to belong

to. And it's really simple like that, but there are always people who don't fit. A lot of our culture is about targeting those people. A lot of our culture approves of might-makes-right, whether it's in an office or hazing on sports teams.

Trey: To generalize, punks often see themselves as rebelling against established power and questioning authority.

Andrew: There are three classes of people: the oppressors, the oppressed, and the spectators. The spectators can either cheer or boo, but that doesn't seem in any way to alter the conduct of the oppressor. And I'm not putting down punk rock. I actually think punks, as long as they stay on this side of the border of nihilism, are making a statement.



There are three classes of people:



the oppressors, the oppressed, and the spectators.

The spectators can either cheer or boo...

Trey: Why might punks be a natural audience for the book?

Andrew: Well, I think that punks are at least willing to say things are wrong. And I think it's from that population that you draw those who are willing to do something about it. I think that our society has taken an insane amount of resources and squandered them to the point that we're losing out when it comes to the creation of those people that have not only the intellect but the empathy to run the country. We seem to be producing less and less of them every year.

Trey: And more and more...?

Andrew: More and more drones.

Trey: Sheep?

Andrew: Well, drones simply because they can sting. Sheep just get in the way.

Trey: At what point do victims of bullying or abuse reach a point where they embrace the role of outcast to the detriment of themselves or others?

Zak: Antisocial personality disorder. The real psychopath examples that are in the essay, that's like the far extreme. That's someone who realizes, "My needs are never going to be met by any other people, and whatever I want, I have to get it myself. There's no emotional response I can get from any humans unless I'm trying to use them for something I need." This is what happens in a kid that never gets that protective nurturing.

Andrew: The worst of them begin to imitate the oppressor. There are plenty of bullies—and I'll use the term generically—who were bullied and ended up envying their oppressors and not hating them. So they practice it on weaker people.

Trey: Were all bullies bullied?

Andrew: Here's what happens. You get peer pressured or even parentally pressured into doing something wrong. If it rings a bell inside you, you say, "I like this." That's one thing. You see it with athletes, you know, and they'll call it hazing. You see it with girls: "Oh, it's such fun to text about how fat so-and-so is." The people who do this, in my opinion, have never been raised to value anything other than superficiality and strength.

Trey: Zak writes in the book about self-esteem. Is that an issue?

Andrew: My pal Joel (Dvoskin, forensic psychologist), he and I were always talking about these programs for sex offenders where they work on building their self esteem. And both of us have always felt—and we can't be alone in this—that why the hell should somebody who hurts children be entitled to high self esteem? He should have low self esteem. He's a scumbag. Self esteem is a generic TV word. Is everybody entitled to self esteem? No, they're not. I think like any other societal response, it's earned. Does it mean it's earned for hard work or for protecting others? No. You can earn it that way, but you can be a blonde with a forty-two-inch chest and you'll have pretty good self esteem until those things start to sag. Sociopaths don't require anything else to maintain their high self esteem. They really don't. They're all by themselves.

Trey: Is bullying synonymous with child abuse?

Andrew: It's got many parallels. It's most synonymous by far with emotional abuse. Child abuse, as you know, is a wide-ranging thing. So, can you be bullied without a single blow being struck? Of course. Can you be bullied without being sexually assaulted? Yes, but you can't be bullied without suffering emotionally.

Zak: I think bullying is definitely emotional abuse. I think they're the same thing. It's a person, or more than one person, using their power to manipulate and harm someone with less power. That's emotional abuse. There are a lot of factors that go into creating someone who has antisocial personality disorder. It's not one thing—physical abuse, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse—but a person learning over a lifetime that there's nothing in it for them to care about. And they can't force themselves to care about other people. If people are intelligent enough, they can explain empathy and they can fake it pretty well in order to just stay out of trouble or to at least camouflage themselves better. But I think the real reason for this book is to not look at those who present a real danger to all of us, but to look at the potential lost with all the victims of bullying, which is a

lot of people. The other side of this giant coin is that we are socialized to accept nonviolent bullying.

Trey: How?

Zak: We're taught, "Oh, be nice. She has her own problems. She has her own issues." The third party gives that sort of advice. "You don't want start an argument. You don't want to have a confrontation." "Can you put it away and handle it?" And even if you do confront the aggressor, the aggressor has almost built-in rotating excuses: "Well, I never said that." "Well, maybe you misunderstood it." "Oh, I said that but I was mad." "Well, let's forget it and start over." Each one sort of asks the victim to give up something: their beliefs, their own sense of memory and hearing, and then asks them to forgive. "Let's forget it and start over." Why does the aggressor get to ask that? It shouldn't be up to the person who commits the harm to determine how the victim interprets the action.

Trey: Andrew has called bullying the root of all evil.

Zak: Oh, definitely. Bullying on the street corner is the same as bullying between countries. I don't see any difference, not if the motivation is the same. Simply: "I'm going to impose my will on you because I can." Like if the cops are screwing with people because they can and no one is going to challenge them on it. What I hope people will see is that any self defense starts with recognizing your own self and recognizing what hurts because that's what most victims are told is, "That didn't hurt you." Most victims of emotional abuse and bullying are told to act like it doesn't hurt. We have to recognize what hurts so we can respond to it. It takes a lot of bravery to actually stand up to the bully and to the people who justify the bully's behavior, because they don't want to stand up either. It takes a hell of a lot of strength to do that. If people could at least agree on the definition of what hurts, they're going to find they're not alone.

Trey: Can you describe the relationship between the bully and the victim?

Zak: The bully wants to force his or her will on the victim and doesn't want to be challenged. If you think about the playground when

we were kids, the schoolyard, the corner, wherever we hung out, there was always one kid who picked on others. But think about the kids the bully stayed away from. Why was it the bully stayed away from them?

Trey: They didn't look like targets. They didn't look weak.

Zak: Yeah. Really, the bully makes assessments of who they could do this to. So they target the person who looks like they're not going to put up a fight, or the person who in the past hasn't put up a fight. And this goes way beyond the playground because it is something that's carried through the rest of our lives.

Trey: Can we interrupt the proliferation of that type of damage?

Andrew: There's not enough cultural support yet, but we can reach the point where a guy's walking down the hall and he sees one guy picking on another. He confronts the bully and all the girls think he's cool. If we reach that point, we're going to turn the corner. But until we do, the kids who are depressed every day can decide to commit suicide, can decide to kill people, can just lose control over their entire cognitive system so they don't see things the way the rest of the world sees them. What sort of knocks me out is that the culture can't understand how things come apart.

Trey: Say more people start to get it. What can they do?

Andrew: Oppressed, oppressor, spectator. You're describing spectator right? Well, the spectator can jump in. That's where we have to get to if we're going to see change. All the *After School Specials* in the world, all the *Karate Kid* movies, they're not going to do anything. The reason bullying is not seen for what it is, is that we haven't expanded it. Hitler starts taking over countries, what do we do? We watch, right? If we'd intervened early, then a lot of bad stuff wouldn't have happened. But we stand on the sidelines, right? We think, "Nobody's bullying us, so how does it affect us?"

Trey: But it does.

Andrew: That's it, but until people get that, we won't have the change. It affects us by permeating us with this notion that someone can opt out, someone can just be a spectator, that no one has to get involved really. Someone can just walk away or look away.

Trey: Why is now the time for a book like this?

Frank: Andrew and I had been talking about the topic of bullying for a while, but in the past years, seeing it on the rise and out of control—and I have twins, and you see it in sports teams. It's a topic that's always been around. Bullying is part of everyone's life, unfortunately, and I think raising the awareness of it is long overdue. I think the time was right to get this message out there to as many people as we could.

Andrew: We're taking on bullying. Everyone agrees child abuse is bad, you know? It's a question of what constitutes child abuse. We're taking on bullying really at its emotional damage level and its consequence



...but that doesn't seem
in any way to alter the
conduct of the oppressor.

level, its cultural level. I don't know what bigger thing there is to shoot at.

Trey: Frank, do your kids face these issues?

Frank: Absolutely. You see it in the school. You hear them talking about what happened on the playground, what happened after school. I think every parent wants to get involved in that, and they should. Technology is just blowing this thing out. It used to be, when we were kids, you got into a fight after school, went home, you're in the safety of your home with your parents, your family, and that was left behind until you had to deal with it the next day. But there was a safe place to go. Now you're getting texts in the middle of the night. You're getting texts at the dinner table. You go to Facebook and see some kid posted something about you. It's never ending and it's really hurting the kids. Andrew's on the front line of that, and he educates me on it. There's nothing more I'd want to be involved with. We're just trying to build a machine that could combat that.

Andrew: I told Frank, you're going to be putting in an insane amount of hours, and do you know what the advance is on the book? He said no. I said, "It's nothing. You're going to get nothing." He said, "Okay, fine, sure." I mean he didn't even blink.

Frank: I was just imagining what Sean (*Heart Transplant's* protagonist) was going through, or myself as a kid, you know sixth or seventh grade and we had to walk across this giant field to get to school and how much of that stuff went on on that field. Some kids would run across the field because the older kids were there doing all those things to you. They were pushing you down, they were tripping you, they were kicking you, you know, they were spitting in your face. That's a heavy part of your life. You're getting introduced to girls and now they're laughing at you because somebody pushed you on the ground, dumped your books.

Trey: How did Zak get involved?

Andrew: Zak got the job because he works with the wretched of the Earth. He works with the absolute bottom of the barrel. He works with those who see prison as a penthouse. So as he goes back through their lives, which is no easy thing, he's seeing people that are invisible to others.

Trey: How do you think such people would respond to *Heart Transplant*?

Andrew: I think the book would really speak to them. What's depressing to me about it is that by the time they get around

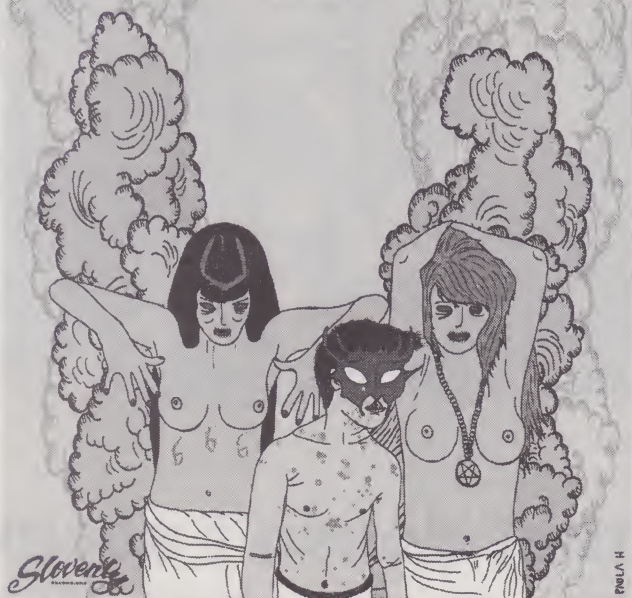
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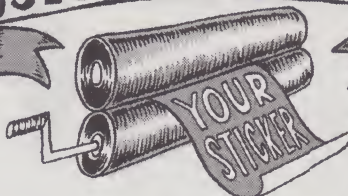
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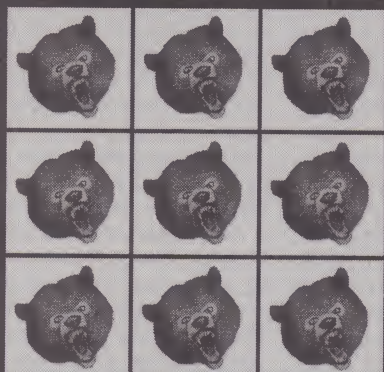
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“Let’s forget it and start over.” Why does the aggressor get to ask that?

to shoplifting it—and shoplifting this book is a bitch.... [laughing] You wouldn’t believe the number of letters I’ve gotten from people who start off by apologizing because they know I won’t make any money on the book they stole. I got a book, it was a long time ago obviously, a copy of *Flood* (Andrew’s first published novel) saying, “This is the most meaningful book I’ve ever read in my life. It’s changed the way I look at things and if you would sign this to me it would mean the world.” I’m looking at the book and it’s kind of beat up for a new book and there stamped on the edges of the paper: “Property of the Los Angeles Public Library.” So thanks a lot pal. I’m not mad that you stole it, per se, but this means nobody else gets to read it. And I’ve had libraries tell me before that, “We don’t carry your books anymore because they get stolen.”

Trey: Is there an audience of disenfranchised people who see themselves in the characters you write?

Andrew: I have enough letters from prison to prove that.... The prison system buys the book and puts it on the book review, or some

individual with enough fire power buys the book and lends it out. That’s one book, and I’d settle for that. If I could write a book and one person would buy it and make sure that everybody else read it, I’d be happy. I really would. I never got into this to make money. I’m not saying I’m a wonderful person or anything, but that wasn’t the goal. I don’t own a newspaper. I don’t own a magazine. I don’t own a TV station. What am I going to do? This, you know.

Trey: You turn down offers to appear on national television all the time. Why talk to *Razorcake*?

Andrew: Todd’s constituency could be split into two parts. I think there are people who just found a home there, and I can understand that. But I also think there are people for whom rebelling against authority isn’t a generic. It could be made specific. If punks decided that they were opposed to a particular law or they wanted to pass a particular law or they wanted to publicize a particular situation.... One of the things about punks that makes it difficult, of course, is that acting collectively on a large scale is not

part of their ethos. But I still think enough people got there by the same path, that there’s a constituency out there that is not being reached except for in magazines like Todd’s. If the Vatican wanted to interview me I’d do it, but I know they wouldn’t print it. At least the punks, even if they thought it was just a dithering old man that didn’t get it, they’d still print it. Also, Todd’s kept this thing going for a long time, which is impressive in itself.

Trey: Well, Todd has become an expert at working as bare-bones as possible and doing a lot with a little. That seems to have been his operating principle for a long time.

Andrew: Right. There’s a huge difference between a punk that learns of necessity to become a survival expert and a punk who lives in the suburbs and likes the music. And of course I want to appeal to those who understand survival. As punks age, they’re not aging out of their fuck-the-system attitude. You can be a punk in your head, you can be a punk in your attitude, but you can still work a job that has some meaning.

Trey: If street kids get their hands on this book, it might speak to them, but there are also people

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who have aged out of the crisis period of their lives in the punk scene. Maybe some of them got married and moved to the suburbs. A lot of them, at least for a significant part of their lives, were always looking for something new, were not basing their life decisions on money and advancement, and had some sense of the injustices we associate with bullying. A lot of those people, when they graduate the street-level lifestyle, carry some of that with them. So when I look at something like *Heart Transplant*, it has a lot of the things that excite people who have been into punk rock: it's unique, it's subversive, it's artistic, you know?

Andrew: I know what you mean. In fact, I'm looking for the audience that will read it, understand it, and pass it on—pass on the knowledge even if they don't pass on the physical book, because punks are tricky. They're sort of coded not to take advice, but they're always seeking it. They're seeking a better way. My idea of a better way is that people protecting weaker people against bullies is considered the highest form of human behavior. If we ever get there, the Earth shifts on its axis.

Trey: And what does that look like.

Andrew: We literally have a huge amount less of everything that's bad—from child abuse to hunger to poverty. I'm not looking to create heroes by reading the book. I'm looking to create an impetus in people who are searching to find other people searching, and decide there is something they can do. And if you have a shot to make real change, you can't pass just because you're not guaranteed the result you want. We have to be inexorable.



My idea of a better way is that people protecting weaker people against bullies is considered the highest form of human behavior.



CHRIST ON



Interview by Matt Average (with some help from Ben Sizemore)

Photos by Donofthedeat

Layout by Matt Average

PARADE

The first time I ever became aware of Christ On Parade was in 1985, seeing a Pusmort ad announcing their first 12", *Sounds of Nature*, on the inside front cover of a local Okie zine called *Silent Scream*. The band's name immediately had me interested. In a review of the record, the editor mentioned the intense speed in which the songs were played. Another reason to check this band out. A little while later, a friend I would go on skate trips with had the *Isn't Life a Dream?* EP, which I would listen to all the time, and put on more than a few mix tapes at the time. Their music and lyrics were not typical of what was going on in the American punk/hardcore scene at the time. This stuff was dark, fast, yet there was a thought out structure that went beyond the usual hardcore song structures of the era. The lyrics were political without being sloganeering. Issues like animal rights and property were presented from a more personal perspective.

Christ On Parade formed after the end of Teenage Warning and Treason. Influenced by bands like Rudimentary Peni, Conflict, Disorder, and Crucifix, this Bay Area band released a string of great records, all of high quality. With each record there was a progression in their sound. At the very core, there was a specific sound they became known for, but the songs became more complex, the speed gave way to a slightly slower tempo, and songs had a way of etching themselves into your mind. Listen to "Landlord Song," "Teach Your Children Well," and "Riding the Flatlands," just to name a few songs, and you'll see what I mean.

The band disbanded in 1989, and in that short time they were together, they accomplished quite a bit: a European tour, U.S. tour, four and a half records, and some compilation tracks. Barrie formed the Hellbillys, Noah went on to join Neurosis, and Mike went on to play in Econochrist. Other band members have been involved with include Blister, Gag Order, and Moorat Fingers.

Then, in 2007 they reformed and started playing shows again. Usually when this happens, it taints a band's legacy. In this case, however, when I consider the bands the members went on to play in, I knew this wouldn't be some cheap nostalgia middle-aged cash in. The shows I've caught have been great. The performance is energetic and the musicianship is tight. Nothing half-hearted or cynical. If you were a fan before, you'll stay a fan, and if you never knew them before, then you may very well be a convert after one show. Prank has reissued their *Sounds Of Nature* 12" with the Thrasher comp tracks, *Isn't Life a Dream?*, and a cover of the Avengers' "The American in Me" included. Also on Prank is their *Loud and Live* LP, recorded live on the air at KFJC in 2007. Check these out, then seek out *Avarice* and *The Mind Is a Terrible Thing...*

Matt: Who came up with the name Christ On Parade?

Malcolm: I did. We had a hard time coming up with a name, and I was just desperate. I started thinking about religious stuff, still punk rock. I wanted a name that offended people. It just kind of popped into my head.

Noah: But also, if you call something a parade, it diminishes the meaning as if it is just a very shallow little community thing going on.

Malcolm: It was exploiting how society, not just religion, but how anything that people value gets exploited. That's sort of the gist of it. The crass commercialization of something.

Matt: Did you guys ever get any heat for it when you would tour?

Malcolm: We got picketed in Long Beach.

Barrie: Oh yeah!

Malcolm: In Twin Falls, Idaho they were afraid to put our name on the flyer. I don't think we ever got that big to get that much attention. It's weird that there's so much more Christian punk now. That stuff didn't exist back then. There was never the thought that people would mistake us for a Christian punk band. That was an oxymoron. In 1985 that just did not exist.

Noah: Our biggest problems were from redneck hicks who liked metal and would go to the punk shows with baseball bats and start breaking bones.

Matt: That brings me to my next question. What was the Bay Area punk scene like when you guys started?

Noah: The Bay Area scene was ours for the making. It was everybody's for the making. It was definitely wide open. We had a lot of great diversity in terms of bands, and tons of little venues that would pop up and last for a few months, then go away. But shows were not formulaic at all.

Malcolm: We started doing shows at New Method because, at one point, there was a lack of places to play.

Matt: New Method was in Emeryville. Is that building even there now?

Malcolm: They razed it a few years ago.

Matt: Emeryville is completely different now.

Barrie: It's a big shopping mall. It used to be factories.

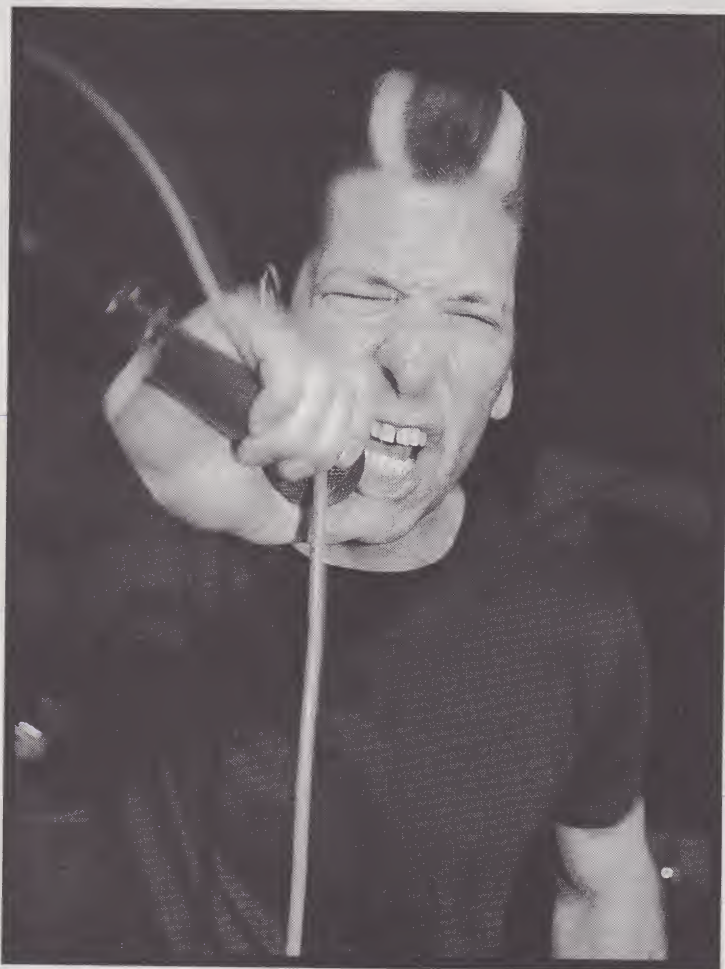
Noah: It used to be just kind of a burned out neighborhood with liquor stores and boarded up houses.

Matt: You guys were also around during the days of the Compound and the Vats.

Malcolm: I lived in the Vats.

Matt: That's not there anymore either, right?

Malcolm: Well, the place that was an actual beer vat was a six story



Our biggest problems were from redneck hicks who liked metal and would go to the punk shows with baseball bats and start breaking bones.

building attached to a larger building. The actual Vats building got torn down. That was where all the shit happened. The rest of the buildings now are fancy condos.

Matt: One thing I noticed over the course of your records is that the sound changed a little bit. You're less speedy towards the end. Was that a natural progression, or was that something you consciously decided to do?

Noah: We just got a little bit better at the songwriting process and we'd start to come up with things we wanted to add. It makes the riffs a little more interesting and a little more complex. We got a little bit better at our playing and came up with a cool note progression instead of super fast chords.

Malcolm: *Sounds of Nature* and *The Mind Is a Terrible Thing* is different. Doing *Sounds of Nature*, it was more like, "This is what I'm feeling right now, but this isn't all that I'm into." The stuff that we did on the next album wasn't something that I just discovered. It was always there and had interest in already. It was just—you're in this mood and you do this. Then you're feeling a little differently. I think we just had a lot of different influences to tap into.

Matt: What happened with Barrie after *Sounds of Nature*? Did you quit?

Barrie: No...

Malcolm: It was ego differences. I look back now, and we had ideas about the band

and we let our egos... I can't speak for Noah, but I feel kind of bad about it—wanting the band to be certain way.

Noah: I think we just saw different directions. I didn't feel bad about it. I kind of wanted to sing. I was writing my own lyrics, I was writing my own songs, and I kind of wanted to be able to just grab ahold of them entirely.

Malcolm: Noah wrote all the lyrics.

Noah: Things grow and change. Honestly, people grow apart. I'm glad we all stayed close because we can all get together and do it again now. We get along great now.

Matt: Barrie, were you cool with it when it happened or were you pissed off?

Barrie: I was pissed off. It was one of those things. We got together, and then within a year later, we were fairly huge for our area and time. I think there was a little bit of an ego clash, and like Noah said, he wanted to sing. It just kind of happened. After I left the band, I moved to Japan. At that point I didn't really care what was going on anymore. I started getting into psychobilly and stuff like that. Came back and started the Hellbillys. I came back in late '88 and the Hellbillys started in '89.

Matt: I have a rumor to confirm. Noah was seventeen at the time of the first tour and had to have a note from his dad. Is that true?

Noah: It wasn't a note. My parents were like,

"No you can't go. You're in high school!" Somehow I managed to convince them. My mom's biggest fear was that the drives were ridiculous, and that we would end up driving off the cliff or something because we'd been driving all night and we would be too tired. What we had to do, we had to have a little sit-down meeting. After band practice, the whole band came over and sat down in the living room and got the third degree by my mom. Malcolm had booked that tour, so he had all the drive times laid out and made good sense, had places to stay, and contact numbers. Not to mention we had a roadie that was about fifteen.

Malcolm: I think the note with the parents thing had to do with taking minors across state lines. That could have been a problem if we had gotten pulled over.

Noah: I was nineteen when we went to Europe.

Matt: What year was the first tour? 1985?

Noah: 1985. When the record came out.

Matt: You guys moved fast! I can't get over that.

Barrie: It was weird. We were lucky. When we did our demo., We just gave it to the right people, who liked it.

Malcolm: My girlfriend worked with Pushead (at Rough Trade). He heard the demo immediately. We did that in March of '85. I think we did the record in June.



Matt: How many songs on the demo ended up on the LP?

Malcolm: All of them.

Matt: How many demos did you record total?

Noah: Just that one, except for the very end of the band. We did a demo of songs.

Matt: That ended up on the collection (*Insanity Is a Sane Reaction*) that came out in the late '90s?

Noah: Yeah.

Matt: Is that the complete demo that's on there?

Noah: A few of the songs are on the LP version and a few of the songs are on the CD version. There might be one missing.

Matt: I thought I had all your records, but I found out through Ben Econochrist that you have a split LP with Die Schlacht. What are the details with that record?

Noah: That was something the Germans did for us to go over there and do a tour with them. It would give us something to sell at the gigs. Our version is recorded live at Gilman Street.

Matt: The songs that are on there are not on any of the other records?

Noah: I don't think so. The songs are all on the records.

Matt: There's a song on there called "Trilogy"?

Noah: "Trilogy," yeah. That's on the final demo. It's probably on the vinyl version of the collection.

Matt: Who was "Joshua Brown"?

Malcolm: Nobody. A friend of mine was named Joshua; we worked together. We were making up stupid lyrics back and forth, and I just used his name. It's not about him. It just rhymes with "Nazi Brown."

Matt: Speaking of Nazis, I was told Noah and Todd were at a riot/brawl at a GG Allin show in 1989.

Noah: I got my nose broke.

Malcolm: It was at Ruthie's. I was there.

Noah: Malcolm actually started it all.

Matt: What happened?

Malcolm: They started picking on someone inside in the club. I forget who, but it was someone smaller than them. It was right in front of me. I was kind of standing in the back. I said something, and they knew me. I forget the guy, but I knew one of them. So, they were like, "That guy's cool because he's in a band." But, like this other guy was fair game to get picked on. So that just irritated me more. It got real heated, but nothing happened inside because of the bouncers. Then, walking outside, I forget how, but it just erupted.

Noah: I remember you were actually heckling them and taunting them.

Malcolm: There was a bunch of us there, and I thought that was a good time to have a fight with them.

Noah: After years of shit...

Malcolm: You'd always hear these stories how they'd catch one person, and someone would get beat. I would always hear about it, and it was like, "Oh, that sucks." Then, it was like, "Fuck, these guys are here. Fuck them!"

Noah: It went on for a long time. Like at the Farm. At all the gigs they would control the pit. People would be dancing, and they would stand on the sides and just punch people in the pit. It escalated to the point...

Malcolm: Because that was it! It was like, "Let's have a fight now, when there's enough of us to beat their ass."

Matt: I remember hearing stories about the Bay Area right before I moved there, that punks were going into the Haight, seeking out skinheads and kicking the shit out of them.

Barrie: I remember hearing that some kids would leave DalJeets, or the shoe store Na Na's, with new Docs, and the SF skins would follow them out, knock them down, take their brand new Docs off their feet, and run off. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. It was pretty shitty for a while.

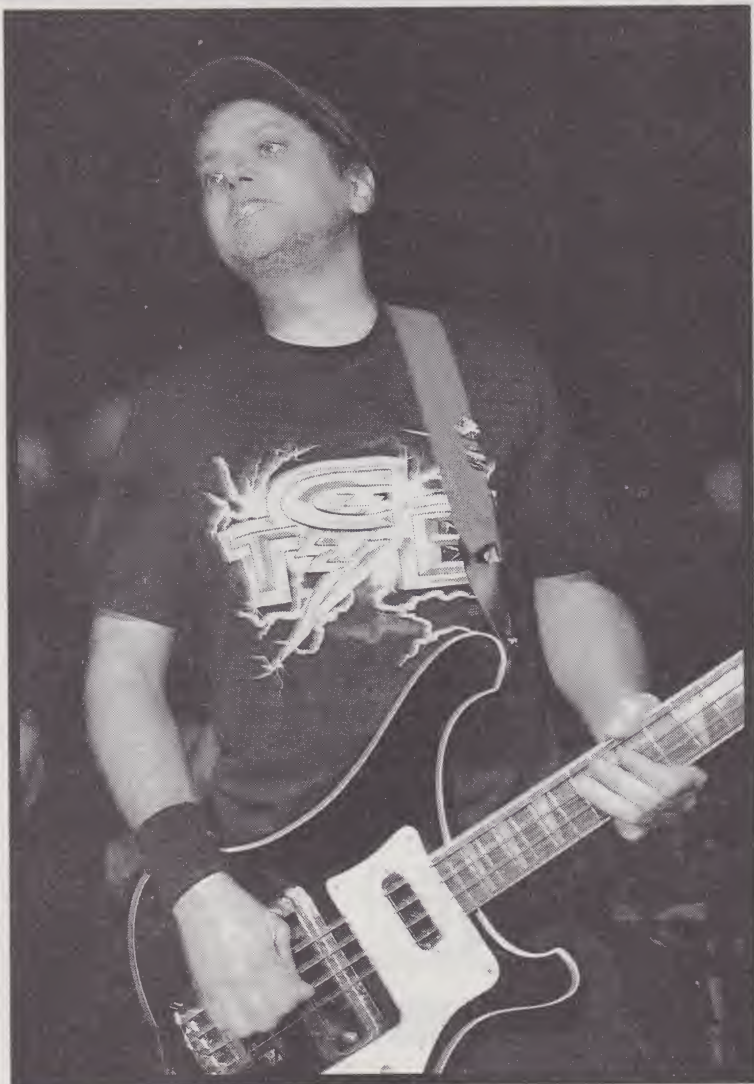
Noah: There's a whole lot of information about all that in the new book that just came out (*Gimme Something Better*). The SF skinhead scene is something that we really did not participate in. That said, they hated us, and they threatened us at our concerts in San Francisco, and we showed up prepared, with bats. They were called "skin pins."

Matt: Here's the last question pertaining to fights. On your original last show in 1989, at Gilman, a huge fight broke out during Neurosis. Was that with the skinheads as well?

Todd: We didn't get to play our last show.

Mike: I got pictures of that, being in Econochrist. I was at Nicki's house last night. She had shown me these pictures she had taken. There's one picture of me playing, there's one picture of me looking, and there's one picture of me with my face in my hands getting ready to jump on somebody. This one skin chick jumped up and hit Ben (vocalist for Econochrist) while

I'm looking forward in terms of what I'm doing and not latching onto something in my past. I just have this horrible fear of life peaked at twenty. That's not what I want, so I'm always looking forward.



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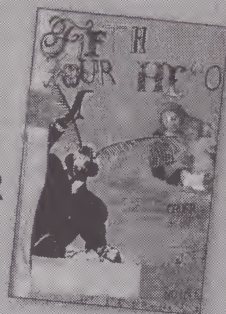
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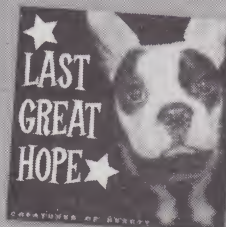
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we were playing. He just grabbed her and shoved her off. Then it went off for a little bit, then calmed down again.

Matt: Then after the show you played a house party?

Noah: We went back to where Todd lived and played in the living room.

Matt: Why did you guys stop playing the first time around?

Noah: We had come back from Europe, and Todd and our bass player, Ron, at the time felt like it was time to quit. I wanted to keep going. I don't think they liked the new songs I was writing. [laughter] They were getting very complicated. Things grow and reach an endpoint. That just happens sometimes. As much as I didn't want it to happen, it happened. Same with Barrie. As much as Barrie didn't want his participation to end, that happened. That's how life is. Life changes.

Matt: What led to you guys getting back together?

Malcolm: Ever since the '90s, every few years Barrie would say, "You know these guys want to play..."

Todd: It was in the '80s... [laughter]

Malcolm: Every few years Barrie would mention, "Oh, so-and-so wants us to play," and I would say, "Yeah, sure," because there's five us, and two of the guys live in Germany. There's always some reason why it wouldn't happen. Then like three years

ago, Todd came out to visit, and Barrie asked again. Somehow, everyone happened to be available this time.

Barrie: Whenever Hellbillys would go to Europe, people were always like, "When are you guys going to do Christ On Parade again?" I would get asked that anytime I went anywhere. So it would pop into my head when I would see Malcolm, or I'd call him up to see what he's doing. Kept testing the water off and on. When Todd was here, I told him, and Todd said, "Fuck it. Let's do it." Then I ran into Mike one day in Berkeley on Shattuck.

Matt: What about you, Noah?

Noah: I was kind of hesitant because I'm in Neurosis, and I have this very deliberate mindset where I'm looking forward in terms of what I'm doing and not latching onto something in my past. I just have this horrible fear that life peaked at twenty. That's not what I want, so I'm always looking forward. So I was kind of resistant to the whole idea for a long time. But I really miss playing with the guys, and these two—Todd and Mike—not even getting to see them at all because they live in Germany, that made it more appealing, to reconnect with them. But I got to say, by the time Christ On Parade ended, the phase of Christ On Parade that I felt the most creative in, was when I playing and writing songs with Malcolm. I think I told Barrie that if Malcolm wanted to do it, I'd love to play.

Barrie: I wouldn't have done it if it wasn't all five of us anyway.

Malcolm: I think we all have a consensus. We hate when bands have two original members and a bunch of new guys, and they try to sell it. I hope no one criticizes us for that. We call ourselves Christ On Parade because that's who we are, the five original members.

Barrie: I think that's the one thing people respect about us doing this because it is all of us, and not like three of us and two new guys. If it's not the original people doing the reunion, then the band shouldn't even be doing it.

Matt: Is there anything you'd like to say before we wrap this up?

Noah: I guess the last thing to say is, that there really does still seem to be people who appreciate our unique flavor of '80s Reagan-era hardcore. That's kind of surprising to us. It's sure fun to play to them, because people really light up when they hear these songs.

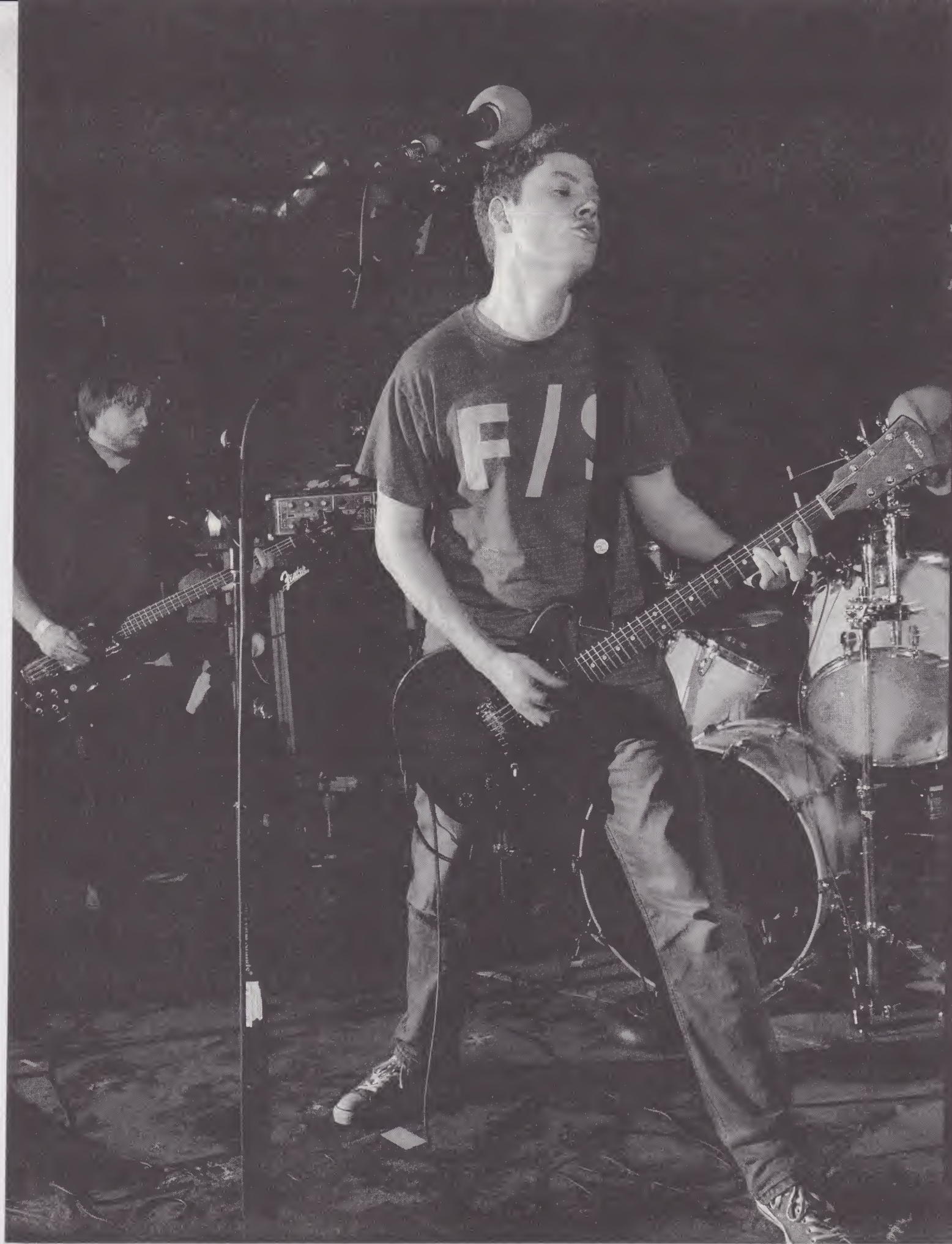
Matt: I can put those records on and get the same charge, and I know it's not nostalgia.

Malcolm: Unfortunately, a lot of the stuff that we talk about is still so timely. The whole state of the country is so shitty now...

Noah: With the war, disinformation...

Malcolm: It's almost funny. We thought it was bad back then, and it's become so much worse. The reason why I enjoy playing these songs is because they're still relevant.





SUN GOD

Interview by Ron Kretsch
Photos by Ken Blaze
Layout by Daryl Gussin

Since its formation in April of 2006, Sun God has

carved out a dandy little niche in its hometown of Cleveland with a simple formula: Hüsker Dü/Dinosaur Jr.-inspired buzzsaw guitar attack with Thin Lizzy/Iron Maiden-esque twin lead harmonies. What combination could say "ROCK!" more decisively? Of course, back in certain days, the very idea would have been heretical—readers of a certain age will surely remember how all-consumingly important the rather silly to-do over "crossover" once seemed—but the passage of time tends to make once-purist rockers more ecumenical. Now that we have two generations of post-internet music fans for whom the entire recorded canon has always been available at the click of a mouse, the old stratifications seem to be dissolving, which really can't be bad.

Fittingly, the band's staffed by rockers from all over the stylistic map: guitarist/singer Josh Durocher-Jones spent his formative years with scene-galvanizing

metalists Insurrect; drummer Dale Ursic graduated from a long series of respected arty noise projects to solidly occupy the Ringo seat for the notorious Homostupids; bassist John Rybicki also leads The Fucking Cops; and guitarist/singer/ringleader Kevin Jaworski has played and excelled in practically every kind of music one can possibly hyphenate with "indie-" or "-core" (9 Shocks Terror, Machine Go Boom, Razak Solar System... it's a long list.) It's a potent combination of talents, and the evidence is in the recordings—two gloriously grimy 7"s, a split LP with Cleveland punk death-dealers This Moment In Black History, and an anthology cassette compiling all of the above with three previously unreleased songs. All the releases are available from Big Purple Records and the band (minus Dale) were kind enough to sit down and shoot the shit about their history and ideas about music.



Ron K: You guys should scooch closer to the tape deck. I just want to be sure it picks you all up.

John: I'm pretty mumbly.

Ron K: We're kind of all mumbly, I think.

Kevin: It'll work.

Ron K: Yeah, if I can't transcribe it, I'll just tell *Razorcake*, "Hey guys? Fuck you. You get nothing!"

Josh: You could just make it all up.

Ron K: True. Fabrication is not beneath me.

Josh: You were really here. You'll remember sort of what we said.

John: Plus Kevin's kind of boring. You should make stuff up for him anyway.

Ron K: Okay, so Sun God is a pretty evocative band name. How'd you come up with it?

Kevin: We came up with the name after we'd already been playing for a bit. I basically never thought of a cool band name in my life so I wasn't even gonna try, and I just decided to pick a song off of a CD, and the first thing I picked up was an Embarrassment anthology, and I didn't find anything I liked. Then I picked up *The Wailing Ultimate*, the old Homestead Records comp, and that had

"Sun God" by Squirrel Bait on it. And I liked that.

Ron K: What was the impetus for forming to begin with? Kevin, you've played in so many styles, and if I'm remembering right, you joined up with bands more often than starting them. So you forming a group on purpose to do something specific was unusual. Did you have the style of music in mind beforehand, or was this a desire to work with certain people and the style grew from them organically?

Kevin: It was something I had wanted to do for years. I see it as kind of an extension of where Cripple Kid left off (Cripple Kid was Jaworski's '90s emo band). Later on, after I'd been playing in 9 Shocks Terror for six or seven years, I still wanted to do a band like what Sun God has become, but I never could find the right people to play with. I finally realized I could get this guy to do this, and maybe Marc (Russo)—who was playing drums in 9 Shocks at the time would want to do it—so I asked a few people and they all agreed, so I finally got to do that thing.

Ron K: What thing?

Kevin: I've always been a big fan of the mixture of aggression and melody. I realize

that's pretty general and can mean a million different things, but I guess the specific thing I wanted to get back to doing was always in my mind. I'd played a lot of different instruments in a lot of different bands, and in a lot of different styles—as you had mentioned—but this always felt like *my* style, like when I'm just sitting around with a guitar, that's what would come out. So there was an obvious need to do that. There's a big Hüsker Dü influence there, of course. They pretty much created that template, but also pretty much anything that's really driving and powerful, but has a hook in it.

Ron K: Now, Kevin came to this from a background in that whole '80s college rock vibe, but Josh, you're approaching this from a background in pretty much straight-up heavy metal, am I right on that?

Josh: Yes and no. I mean, I spent four or five years in a metal band, but before that I was in punk bands and I played acoustic by myself for a while. I have eclectic tastes and a history of bouncing back and forth, spending a certain period of time doing one thing. Then when it falls apart, I jump on something totally different. When Kevin



Definitely aggression, definitely melody.

approached me to do this, I was stoked because I'd been doing this *one thing* for so long. It was easy for me to attach myself to it. I had only ever been in the one metal band, and so Sun God wasn't really that much of a departure. In high school I was in a bunch of shitty punk bands that didn't do a whole lot, didn't last a very long time, but I shared a lot of what Kevin was talking about: definitely aggression, definitely melody.

Ron K: How did it work out when you two got together and started playing?

Kevin: We hit it off pretty quickly. I had some tunes that I'd been sitting on for awhile—some of them for five or six years, that I just never got to use—plus some stuff that I made up more around the time we formed, and I just started showing stuff to Josh. I went over to his house with a guitar and practice amp, showed him a couple of riffs, and right off the bat he had ideas for them. Then he had his riffs and we started piecing stuff together. It's always been a pretty organic sort of process where there's not really a lot of hand-wringing or arguing. Musically, we're pretty much on the same page as far as all that goes. Obviously, we

have separate styles. We don't play or think identically, but we mesh pretty well.

Josh: Yeah, I could probably count on one hand the amount of times we had to quibble about a part or compromise about a part.

Kevin: Yeah, that hasn't happened too often.

Josh: Probably because the first period of the band was when Kevin was bringing songs to me, and then at a certain point along the way I started bringing some songs to the table. Then that kind of became more back-and-forth. I didn't even touch a microphone for the first year and a half. Now the set's almost fifty-fifty.

Ron K: Along the way, you've accumulated more ex-members than current members. Has it basically been Josh and Kevin and their rhythm section, or have all the people passing through the band really changed it significantly?

Kevin: Once we started going through the changes—and it was really all out of necessity, someone moves away, things like that—we realized that the two of us are the creative part of the band. You don't necessarily *want* to constantly be plugging in new rhythm sections, but it was necessary. It slightly changed the band, but since Josh and I write

all the material, it hasn't been too weird. It's been just more work than anything, just trying to get new people acclimated to what's going on. It hasn't changed drastically. It's maybe a little less riffy and more melodic, but those elements have always been there since the beginning anyway.

Ron K: John, what's it like for you, being the fourth or fifth bass player? Do you feel like the clock is ticking on you?

John: [Laughs] I don't know. I feel like I've been better than some of the bass players that have come before, and I'm not going to go crazy or leave town anytime soon.

Josh: You've had a good run, too. [Laughs] I don't have all the timelines, but...

John: I've been going as long as the last bass player. I've done two tours, which I think might be the record.

Josh: You're tied, I think.

John: But Sun God's been really cool for me because most of the bands I've been in before, I've been one of the writers, and I've always kind of wanted to try being in a band where I take a back seat. I come in. I hear the songs. I make up my parts. The only weird thing is that each bass player has played the



I pretty much
wanted it to
sound shitty
in a good way.

songs differently—and on a lot of the songs every bass player has played—so I take a bit from here, a bit from there, at least from the ones that have been recorded. I've seen Sun God with all the bass players and I've really liked the band since it was formed.

Kevin: The other thing that made it somewhat harrowing to have to go through members is that the bar was set pretty high from the beginning. We've had really good bass players. I'm not just saying that because they're my friends, but Lonn Schubert, as far as the scene that we're in, he's regarded as the best bass player in the city, and Pete Levine came in and he was absolutely incredible too, in a different way. And Tony Erba (also ex-9 Shocks Terror), obviously, he does what he does and he's really fucking great, and then John fit right in. To me, it's surprising we've been able to pull it off as long as we have!

Ron K: I'd like to talk about recording. On your first 7", (s)pain, there's a dropout in the tape or something right near the beginning, and accidents like that can happen in the studio, of course, but once you leave them in, they're not accidents, they're choices. It reflects priorities. That came out of the same studio as some really top-notch sounding stuff, but yours almost could have been done on a boombox. Was that an aesthetic choice or was it a get-it-done-and-get-out thing?

Kevin: I pretty much wanted it to sound shitty in a good way, if that's possible. The inspiration behind it was that Paul Maccarrone, the engineer at that studio, brought an old 4-track reel-to-reel and recorded a practice of

ours. I don't know much about the equipment, but I know that we got this totally blown-out, distorted sound out of that 4-track tape. So what I wanted to do was go in and do a straight, clean, basic recording but add that element of blown-out distortion to it, and try to blend those things together and have it sound whole, and good, and clear, but to still have this shitty nastiness to it as well. I don't know how well we accomplished that. I think maybe it just sounds shitty.

All: [Laughter]

Ron K: I'm listening to it on an old Califone beater, so it's not like I'm rockin' any really hi-fi shit anyway.

Kevin: I think it sounded more blown-out than anything. At the time I thought it was something to try. I'd never done anything like that before. Even when I listen to it now, I don't think it's terrible. I wouldn't do it again, though.

Josh: The Split 12" with This Moment In Black History was going to be a demo of those songs. Zombie Proof (studio) was moving or closing—we didn't know what—so we wanted to record there one last time. Then it turned out we didn't have enough time to record new things for the split, so we picked the best songs from that demo. If that comes off at all muddy, it wasn't on purpose that time, but it has that same element as well. The new songs on the cassette, we did at a different studio, and it's a lot cleaner and punchier.

John: I think the split's cleaner than the 7".

Josh: I do too. I do too, but it still has that quality.

John: Right, I wouldn't call it slick!

Josh: Also everything before the new songs on the cassette was recorded on tape. The new ones were digital.

Ron K: So you guys have been doing really well in Cleveland. You're one of the bigger underground bands at home now and you tour a lot. How have the out-of-town audiences been receiving you?

Kevin: It's been good. When you're a band on our level, putting out your own records, not really with any distribution setup for those records, you're going on the road because you really want to.

Josh: When you play out of town, you're relying on the friend who set up the show to get people to show up for his band.

Kevin: Yeah, there's zero promotional machine behind the band. The shows haven't always been the most well-attended, but the people who are there always seem to be really into it. We've gotten to play some really good shows and had a lot of fun doing it, but we're definitely eating some shit on the road.

Josh: We've also been doing the same route a lot, and that can have its advantages and disadvantages. Same places, same faces, but...

John: It's hard to find bands that fit, so people don't always really know what show to set up for us. So, sometimes, the other bands we play with, we really don't always fit with them.

Josh: We'll be on a hardcore show, or a really light indie-rock show. It's either we're so melodic we're the oddballs out, or so loud we're the oddballs out.



John: Sometimes people still think that Tony is in the band, there's the idea that since it's ex-9 Shocks, or because Dale is in Homostupids, people come out expecting that sort of thing. Still, a lot of times, people are still into it.

Kevin: I've definitely talked to people who came out because, as John mentioned, it'll say "Ex-9 Shocks Terror" on the flyer and they'll come out to the show. Usually, the response is, "That's not at all what I was expecting, but that was great." So I guess the short answer to your question is the response has been good.

All: [Laughter]

Ron K: I'm not into short answers. I'm trolling for stories here! The more you blab, the less I have to actually write! So is any effort being made to take the band up a level or two?

Kevin: Absolutely. I would love to do that. We started putting out our own records because nobody else seemed interested in doing it. If we wanted it, we had to do it ourselves. And it's still pretty much like that. If someone wants to pay to put out a record, I would say, "please do." I'd love to do more touring. The reason we've done things the way that we have has been out of necessity, not necessarily out of intention.

Josh: Would we like it? Sure! Do we have a game plan? No. Even when we've had game plans in the past, we've had to put them aside to teach the new bass player the songs or something.

Kevin: [Laughs] Yeah, the aforementioned revolving rhythm section has, in a way,

kind of slowed things down. When you're constantly teaching someone the songs, you're not working on anything else.

Josh: There's a lack of recorded material for that reason. Kevin and I haven't stopped writing songs, but there hasn't been a chance to lay them down.

Ron K: Don't you think you have the stability at this point that that'll change, though?

Josh: Yeah, hopefully.

Kevin: Yeah, I'm really happy with the lineup right now. It feels stable. I like what everyone's doing musically. I like dealing with all the people in the band now, so I think we finally have some stability.

Ron K: Maybe an LP soon?

Josh: We have the songs for it.

John: Maybe another 7" and then a full-length. Probably not until the end of the year, at least.

Kevin: Yeah, right now we're kind of broke so funding a 12" right now is not a huge priority. And we all have other bands going on, too. Not that Sun God would necessarily take a back seat, but... as far as what's going to happen in the near future I'm not really sure.

Ron K: Yeah, about those other bands, do we want to talk about those a bit?

John: Josh and I also play in a band called The Fucking Cops, and that's a pop punk band. I write most of the songs for that. Also Josh and I have another new thing but that's real far on the backburner.

Josh: And I'm about to leave for two months to go out on tour with this band Howl from Providence. I'm filling in for some touring.

I'm actually getting on a plane tomorrow morning to go to Providence for two weeks and then we fly to Europe. It's gonna be a fun few months, but that's all time I won't be in Cleveland working on Sun God. Cops have a tour in May, going to the West Coast. It's gonna be a busy year!

John: And next week you're getting your face molded so you can be an extra in a zombie movie.

Josh: Supposedly!

Kevin: I'm doing a new band called Pleasure Leftists with Steve Pepper from 9 Shocks and Homostupids. I imagine by the time this interview is out, we'll have a record out. I really just wanted to play with Steve again. The band is very '80s-sounding, kind of gothy post punk. When we first got together, I wasn't really sure what it was going to sound like. Steve and I just talked about what we wouldn't have a problem with it sounding like, and it ended up sounding like that. It's been really fun. We don't even really write songs for that. We just come up with everything at practice; Steve starts playing a bass line, I start noodling...

Ron K: Anything in closing about the future of Sun God?

Kevin: I just want to keep doing what bands do. Make records, play shows.

John: We definitely like doing it so it's not going to stop anytime soon. If other people aren't going to put out our records, we're going to find a way to do it ourselves.

AIRFIX



No one wants to hear a bunch of old fuckers bleating about the good old days, but sometimes it's nice when you go to a show where half the audience could be your kids, to see some older statesmen still giving it the large. The Airfix Kits make age a moot point. With one member hitting forty and another in his mid-twenties, they prove that age doesn't mean shit in our little island of punk rock. I'm lucky. I get to see them all the time and I'm guessing you don't.

They are like a Scots Cockney Rejects mixed with the art schoolery of the Fall or Wire: sharp, funny, to-the-point, and a good fuckin' time. Listening to their records is like going down to the local park with yer mates with four cans of high-strength lager and a beat up stereo.

Interview by Tim Brooks


Layout by Lauren Measure

Photos by Mark Murrman

Thanks to Bryony for transcription
and Isaac and Logan for moral support.

KITS





I would not be here if it wasn't for
John Peel. I'd be working in a
mine somewhere
probably listening to Oasis.

Tim: Allan, you are the oldest in the band, right?

Allan McNaughton: Thirty-nine.

Tim: Wait. So, Alan how old are you?

Alan Kasameyer: Thirty-five.

Tim: And where'd you grow up?

Kasameyer: Here. In the Bay Area, Livermore.

Tim: And Phil, you're twenty-six?

Phil: Yeah.

Tim: That's one of the things I wanted to talk about, the age difference. You were leaving school when Phil was seven! How does the age difference work in the band?

McNaughton: It hasn't really come up or anything. There's only four years between me and Alan.

Tim: But what about Phil?

Kasameyer: We talk about the old days more than he does.

Tim: So Allan, you started in a band at what? Fifteen? And that was Glue?

McNaughton: I was in a band before that called Teenagers From Mars.

Tim: And then Glue, which had a modicum of success.

McNaughton: I wouldn't say that,

Tim: You were on John Peel!

McNaughton: Yeah, that was probably the highlight of my life, actually. We never did a Peel session, though.

Tim: That was quite a big thing.

McNaughton: Yeah, it is until you realize he literally played any old thing. I listen to a lot of the old shows I downloaded and he really did play anything. It was a seal of approval, in a way.

Tim: Alan, was John Peel any kind of influence?

Kasameyer: Yeah, I've owned a number of Peel Session records over the years. I never knew it was a radio show.

Tim: Your band is the kind of band that I can imagine John Peel playing. I wonder how much of the musician you became is because of listening to him.

McNaughton: There's no way to even tally

it. I would not be here if it wasn't for John Peel. I'd be working in a mine somewhere probably listening to Oasis. Although, I do listen to Oasis [laughs].

Tim: So Phil, what bands have you been in before?

Phil: Sydney Ducks, Secret People, Ebonics, Right On, Allegiance, and Violent Minds, briefly, for two shows.

Tim: If you were to say three things that were different between Airfix Kits and Violent Minds, what would they be?

Phil: Less tattoos, less drugs, more years.

Tim: Is it different playing with people who are older than young kids?

Phil: No, same shit. Except your bass player can usually do more shit.

McNaughton: Limited opportunities based on adult responsibilities. I give him [points to Phil] a run for his money in the energy stakes.

Tim: Allan, do you feel like it's a young man's game? You're nearly forty years old!

McNaughton: It's true and I used to think

you'd get to forty and be like, "Why am I still doing this?" but there's a lot of good bands made up of old people—where people know what they're doing and have been doing it for a while. They're really into it.

Tim: So, at this point, what are you trying to get out of the band?

McNaughton: What I'm trying to get out of it is to have a good time, play gigs. And I enjoy writing songs and practicing and recording. It doesn't sound very ambitious, but if I didn't have a full-time job and could take three months to go on tour, I'd be in a band that would do that. We make decisions based on reality. Phil's busy with school. Alan is busy with his kid. I'm busy with work. We do as much as we can do. I hope this year we will be able to do more and get out and do some more shows, put out some more records. It's got to be fun, though, or it's just not worth doing. At this point, it's not like I'm going to have a career out of a band.

Tim: You have a job, you make money. Alan, you have a kid, so why are you still in a band? What do you get out of it?

Kasameyer: I wouldn't get out the house much. Socializing is the main reason for me.

Tim: Alan, how has having a kid affected you as a band member?

Kasameyer: I can argue that we shouldn't play weeknights. I don't wanna tour much, if at all. The band is not a high priority in my life, but I really like it. I had been ramping down my desire to do grandiose things with music for several years before I became a parent. It's something fun to do with friends when you can, and it's okay if you can't. It hasn't really changed that much, but what we can do is less. We have this limitation. We practice on schedule, and if we book a show, it's gonna be a good one.

Tim: So having a kid focuses you on what you really want to be doing?

Kasameyer: Yeah. We're not playing Tuesday night at the Stork Club anymore.

Tim: Do you think it not being the highest priority means that you're a little more free? It sounds to me like you guys have your own thing. You don't fit into anything. In the Bay Area, you don't sit in a genre. Hardcore kids and pop punk kids like you.

McNaughton: Or no one likes us! The other thing is being older; we're doing what we like. We're not trying to get anywhere or be successful and sell loads of records. When I have free time, I don't wanna be sat in a van. I do feel bad for Phil—as maybe this is his prime time to be having fun being in a band.

Kasameyer: And the great thing about us having a kid is that if you're asked to play a gig you don't wanna play, you can use the baby as the perfect excuse, like "Oh, yeah, you know, we really wanna play but we just can't!"

McNaughton: We don't look for shows. We get asked to do them and turn down eighty percent of them. We get asked to play a lot of gigs that we don't do just because

we don't do that many gigs. We want to make the ones we do special. Ideally, it's a weekend, and either with bands from out of town that we like or bands that are our friends. We want to have a good time with our friends, regardless.

Tim: Straight out the gate, you did a demo and within a short amount of time you have a record out on two of the bigger independent labels within the punk scene. Deranged is a renowned big label and so is Dirtnap. Other bands who tour incessantly haven't been able to do that.

McNaughton: Yeah, but we were just riding the Young Offenders' coattails.



Tim: [laughs] How does it feel to be San Francisco's second best skinhead band? I hear your crowd creates some minor issues?

McNaughton: [laughs] We do occasionally get skinheads with Napoleon complexes causing trouble.

Tim: You do have quite a mixed crowd. However much you say people don't like you, they do. You see totally different faces at shows. Do you think that's 'cause you've been around a long time?

McNaughton: I don't know, to be honest. This band is different from Giant Haystacks, but it's not that different. The last Giant Haystacks gigs we played were the most well attended ones. People were there, singing along, and we were like, "Who are you people?! Because you weren't at any gigs before."

Tim: Is it a change of time? Like you're in a band when people wanna hear something different?

McNaughton: Yeah, well, we were ahead of our time. I mean we play elements of our own stuff but there's other stuff mixed in. We just do what we do. It's great if people like it. One major difference is that Giant Haystacks was quite a serious band—it wasn't an in-your-face thing, with anarcho politics or whatever—but I tried to have a political thing going on with that. We started the day after September 11th and it was hard not to be thinking about politics, whereas Airfix Kits is a lot less serious, maybe more about having a laugh.

Tim: So you have to be non-political to be more popular and get on big labels?

McNaughton: It could be. I wouldn't put it like that, but it could be. We have a laugh.

Tim: People who haven't see the Airfix Kits—which is most people outside the Bay Area—you do have a certain stage presence and you play a certain amount on being Scottish. You make fun of the crowd.

McNaughton: Yeah I stole that from Young Offenders.

Tim: Is that something that came naturally or were you like, "Right, I need to do this—be more involved with the audience."? It's almost like a little alter ego.

McNaughton: Is it?

Kasameyer: He's taller on stage. Your persona did change. In Giant Haystacks, you weren't that comfortable. It's probably a time thing.

McNaughton: I think I realised that the bands I liked did that, you know? Like Hard Skin and Wat Tyler. It's something that in my

day-to-day, I'm not really like that, but if I'm out having a drink then I am like that. I also drink a lot more than I used to.

Tim: Phil, how do you feel playing drums behind this comedy/cabaret act?

Phil: It's cool, it's funny. It's one of things I look forward to—seeing what's going to happen with the banter between Allan and the crowd. A lot of that has to do with what kind of show it is and who's in the crowd.

McNaughton: Let's cut to the chase—if we don't play with the Young Offenders, the right people are not in the audience to make the Airfix Kits show as memorable!

Tim: When you are on, it's on. It feels like a lot of power you have is from the way you are on stage, your aesthetic.

wasn't into that scene and didn't even really collect straight edge records.

Tim: So why were you straight edge, and why aren't you now?

McNaughton: It's such a long time ago that it's barely worth talking about, but growing up in Scotland, I definitely drank when I was a kid. The culture was about working all week and getting pissed on the weekend. You fuck all weekend and go back to work. I stopped drinking when I was eighteen and it was a rejection of that. Scottish culture was basically ruined by alcoholism. I started drinking again at twenty-eight when I first got a full-time job!

Tim: You've been here for fifteen years. Do you still feel like an alien or do you feel part of it?

home for Xmas and there's this mag called the *List*. It's an events and culture mag. They had the top one hundred Scots and I was surprised how many people I knew or had some connection with. Maybe if I'd stuck around in Scotland, I'd be one of the top one hundred creative Scots! I found Scotland to be so stifling. I'm not sure I could have done there what I've done here. If you can get your head above water there, there is actually support and exposure for it and it's a much smaller market, so you can actually get some recognition.

Tim: Do you feel like you've made it?

McNaughton: In some ways, I feel like I've won the lottery, having the life I've got. I never made it.

Tim: And other Alan, you've always been in the Bay Area?

Kasameyer: Most of the time. I spent five years in Oregon. I'll probably stick around here.

Tim: Which bands were you in before?

Kasameyer: I'd been playing in a metal band up there called Siberia and, before that, was Morse Code Harpoon, which was a little more emo. And then Your Mother. Before that was Emo Summer, a joke band that went on for way too long.

Tim: You were in Your Mother with Craigums who has recorded, what, everything you've done with Airfix Kits and Giant Haystacks?

Kasameyer: We try to pay him, but it's usually for free.

Tim: The guarantee that every Scotsman likes!

McNaughton: Short arms, deep pockets.

Tim: When you joined Airfix Kits, it felt like your drumming really made the sound. It brought something really different.

Phil: I'd played in mostly hardcore bands before this. It was one of those things. They asked, I loved the demo, and that was it.

McNaughton: We got Phil to fill in on our first gig with the Marked Men and Young Offenders. We didn't want to miss it, so we got Phil to play that one gig. Before we even played the gig, we asked him to be in the band. He didn't want to commit. We had to court him a little bit.

Phil: The sound of the band definitely changed from the demo and Giant Haystacks.

McNaughton: The biggest difference between Giant Haystacks and Airfix Kits is Phil's drumming. It's not just the same band with a different drummer. We play differently with the way Phil plays. It gives us freedom to do stuff we didn't do with Giant Haystacks. We can play a bit looser, more spontaneous. It gives it a different energy.

Tim: I have couple of questions any of you can answer. Which one of the band comes from the same town as the filmmaker Enrico Coccozza?

Kasameyer: Phil in Sacramento.

Tim: Wrong. It's actually Allan. Wishaw, in Scotland.

McNaughton: Really?! An experimental filmmaker? I'll look that up.

Tim: Who played tuba in high school and college?



McNaughton: With Giant Haystacks, there was a certain amount of control. I had to be in control of everything for it to work. I was less relaxed. Now it's not as complicated. I don't have to worry as much.

Tim: That's another thing. American Alan, have you ever been straight edge?

Kasameyer: No.

Tim: So was it the Airfix Kits that made you break edge?

McNaughton: No.

Tim: And Phil?

Phil: No, I'd already turned twenty-one.

Tim: It is funny that two out of three of you have a straight edge past and none of your bands have ever been straight edge.

McNaughton: I was straight edge, but I


McNaughton: I feel in between. I don't feel American by a long shot, but when I go home I don't fit in there either.

Tim: When you left, did you think you'd go back?

McNaughton: I didn't give it any thought. I never thought about anything, in terms of two- or five-year plans. Probably to my detriment, I'd just do what seemed best at the time.

Tim: Do you think you are in a better position now then when you were living in a council estate (public housing) in Glasgow?

McNaughton: Yes and no. A lot of people who I know from Scotland have gone on to do some pretty amazing things and have done really well for themselves. I was just



Less tattoos, less drugs, more years.

Kasameyer: Me! I still have it in the practice space!

Tim: Who had baggy jeans and a Krishnaesque pony tail?

Kasameyer: I'm going with that guy [points at Allan].

Tim: So I wanted to talk about the review of a song called "Playing Both Sides" where the person reviewing it said that it was ambiguous. Can you talk about that?

McNaughton: I can only be vague on the subject of ambiguity!

Tim: The review said that it was ambiguous with possibly sexist lyrics. Agree or disagree?

McNaughton: What's wrong with being sexy?

Tim: Enough said. You also have a song called "80s Aesthetic," and you talk about how everyone looks to the '80s and stuff, but doesn't your band do that?

McNaughton: Yes.

McNaughton: I'm as open to making fun of myself as anyone else. It's tongue in cheek.

Tim: Have you had to explain what Airfix Kits are?

McNaughton: Oh, very often.

Tim: And, American Alan, what are they?

Kasameyer: From what I hear, they're, like, model airplane things. It took me a while to figure it out.

Tim: How'd you come up with that name?

McNaughton: You know, I thought another band had it. I thought that'd be a great name but I'd heard it before. I was looking it up. I was sure there'd be a Messthetics band of that name, some band from Croydon in 1976; it seemed like it would be.

Kasameyer: If they exist, they don't have an internet presence.

McNaughton: I stopped short of emailing the Messthetics guy.

Tim: It's interesting because a lot of people here don't know what an Airfix kit is. To me, being English, it has such significance, but to a lot of people it's two words stuck together.

McNaughton: Same with Giant Haystacks.

Tim: So Giant Haystacks toured a lot and Airfix Kits really haven't?

Kasameyer: We've been to Portland and Texas.

Tim: Is it that because you don't want to?

McNaughton: I would do a short tour. We really couldn't now that Alan has his daughter Georgia. Maybe in a few years, if we're still a band!

Kasameyer: We've floated the idea of going to Europe for a week or something.

Tim: How was travelling to Texas, with your family, compared to other times playing in a band touring?

Kasameyer: Well, it was my first time going to a punk rock festival—and I didn't have much to compare it to—but for those four days, compared to what I saw other people doing, we had a very different experience. Georgia was also sick the entire time so during the day we didn't really go out. We went to Barton Springs once, but she was miserable.

Tim: Chaos in Tejas—how did it work playing that? You played how many times?

McNaughton: Twice.

Tim: On the Friday?

McNaughton: Yeah, with Riverboat Gamblers and then we played a weird gig that was meant to be Leatherface but they didn't get into the country.

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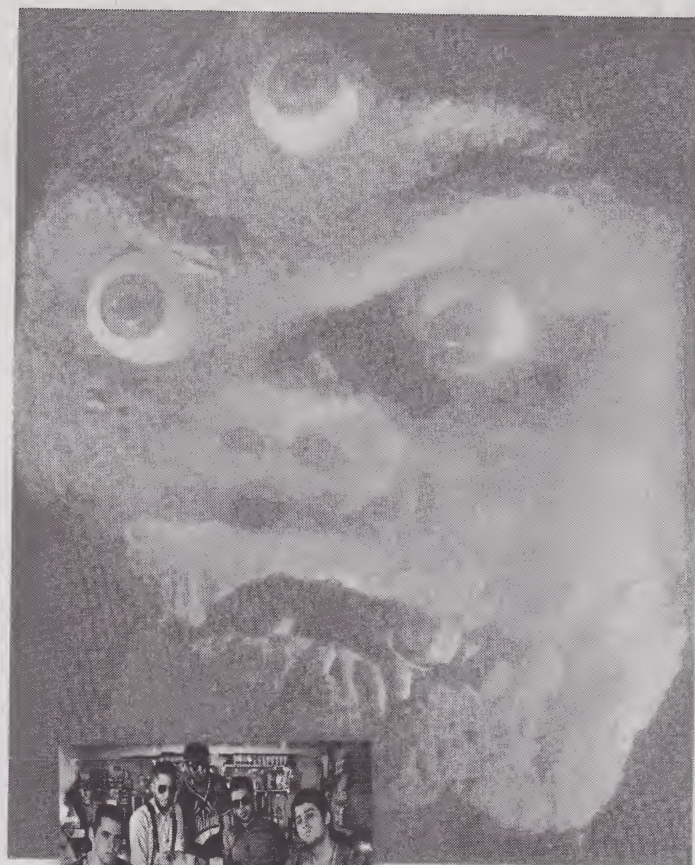
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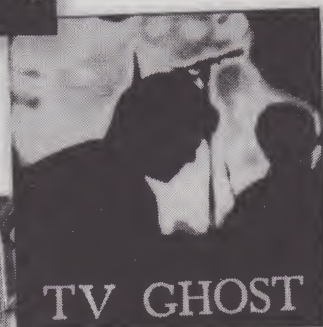
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What's wrong with being sexy?

Tim: Did you fit in?

McNaughton: No one did: Arctic Flowers, Lion Of Judah, Young Livers, Shanghai River...

Kasameyer: And a straight edge band.

McNaughton: Oh yeah, Stick Together. They had like four songs. They were on tour with Lion Of Judah. A bunch of people came to see Arctic Flowers and then left, but it ended up being the most fun gig we've ever played.

Tim: How do you feel about the new wave of big festivals like Chaos in Tejas and Goner fest? Is this the new thing? Does it hurt smaller bands?

McNaughton: I think that is the new thing. I'm not sure how these things work. I know how we got to play—we're friends with the guy who organizes it and we played for nothing. I think if you're a good band, there are so many different ways to get yourselves heard. The way the world is shrinking, people can see bands from Australia at Goner fest. I'm not so sure on the Scion garage fest, though. Things like Chaos in Tejas and Goner fest are each curated by one person who is just putting on the bands they like. They wouldn't have them play if they didn't like them. It's someone's personal taste. It's not a democracy. It's at the whim of who is organizing it. We had some trouble during our set.

Tim: Can you talk a bit about that?

McNaughton: Well, what actually happened is this guy comes up to me while I'm setting up—I'm using a borrowed Marshall stack so I want it to sound as wimpy as possible—and

this guy goes, "Dude, all right, I'm here with two of my friends. We're the three Mexican dudes. We're ready to go off, so play as hard as you can!" And I just said, "Hey, I don't think we're your band, you know?" And he said, "No, no, it'll be great. Just think *heavy*," and then he left. So we started our set with probably our heaviest song, actually. Apparently, one of these guys had gotten in a fight with one of our friends.

Kasameyer: We saw a lot of bald heads flailing around.

McNaughton: There were some handbags flying around and Ben Sizemore (Econochrist) giving me the "cut!" hand sign.

Tim: That's why you stopped!

McNaughton: When Ben Sizemore tells you to stop, you stop.

Tim: I'd have stopped.

McNaughton: Yeah, and the gentlemen were escorted out. We resumed having the best night ever.

Tim: So, Allan, how did you end up being a window dresser? Who are you a window dresser for?

McNaughton: Levi's.

Tim: And what does a window dresser do?

McNaughton: I'm not really a window dresser. I am involved in designing them. There's a lot of faffing about.

Tim: Did you imagine yourself in "fashion" back in Wishaw?

McNaughton: Oh yeah. All I ever thought about was sequins. I was really into Slade.

Tim: Alan, you have a certain style of bass playing. Are you technically trained?

Kasameyer: I was a music major in college and took some lessons when I was thirteen, fourteen, but I wouldn't say I cultivated it.

McNaughton: If I'd started a band where everyone had learnt to play listening to the same 7" records, it'd be very different. It'd probably be very boring. There are a lot of bands where you can tell that everyone's going for the same thing and they wanna emulate a particular era or label output. It's textbook. We could certainly do that. I could say, "Go listen to this record," but it would sound a lot more...

Tim: ...more like Cockney Rejects.

McNaughton: Which would be my dream.

Kasameyer: Allan writes more songs now, whereas in Giant Haystacks we'd jam and come up with a part, you know?

Tim: It definitely feels tighter.

McNaughton: We have more choruses.

Tim: Choruses are key.

Kasameyer: We sometimes can't figure out words.

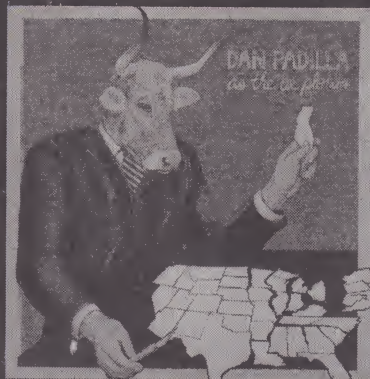
McNaughton: In which instance, "la la la" is fine.

Tim: Do you think there's a luxury of being in a band in San Francisco and that because people have a spotlight on this scene, you get to pick and choose what you do a little more? Would it be the same band if you were from Cleveland?

McNaughton: A lot of good bands come here to play, so you get to play with them. We're lucky in that our first show was with the Marked Men, for example.

Tim: Phil, do you want to do more with the band or are you happy to go with the flow?

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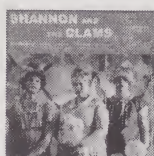
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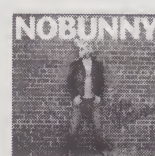
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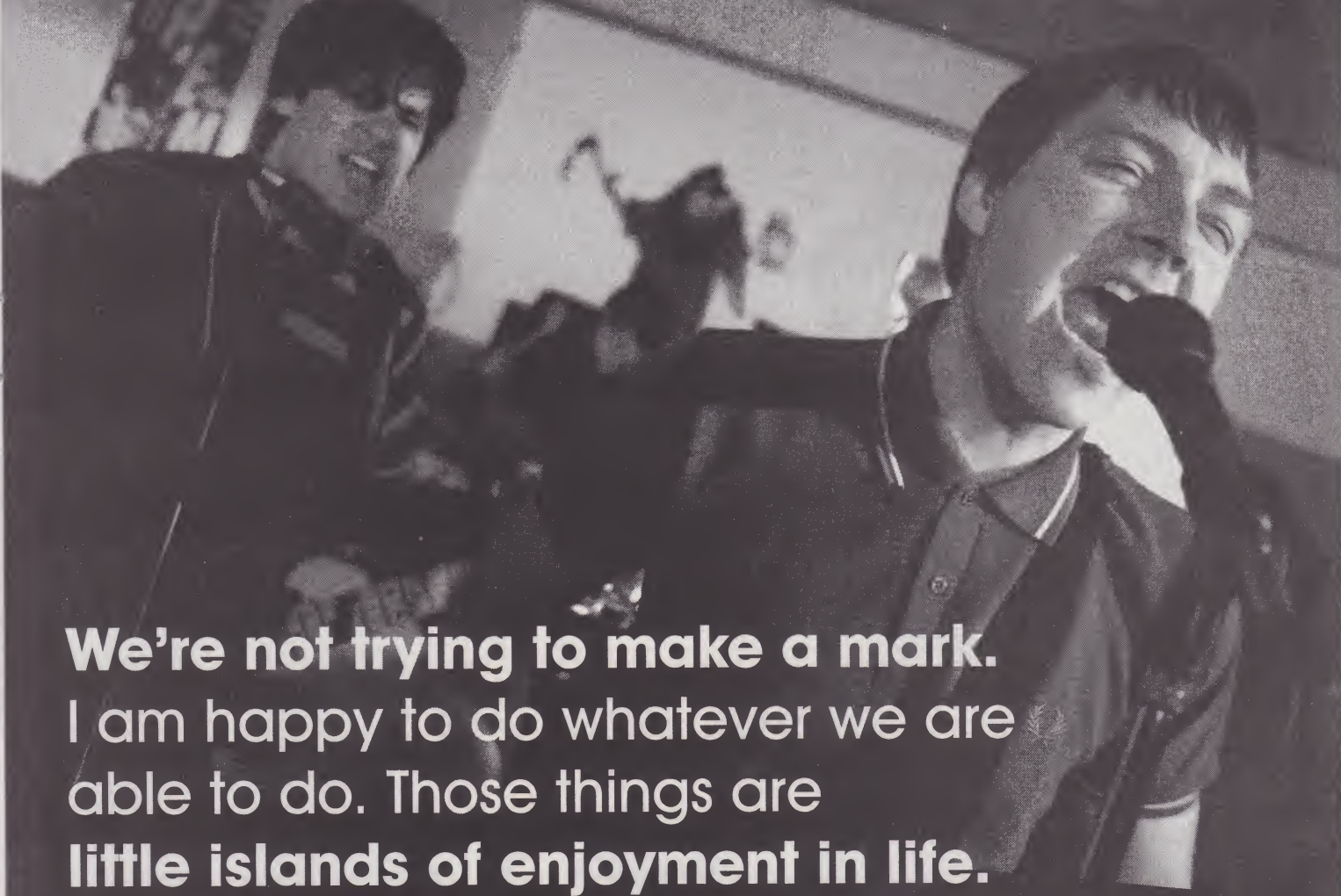


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**We're not trying to make a mark.
I am happy to do whatever we are
able to do. Those things are
little islands of enjoyment in life.**

Phil: For me, it's good to be in a band with people who aren't ready to hit the road 365 days a year. It's got me to go back to school, get my life in order.

McNaughton: A mate of mine was a drummer in a band and they got asked to sign to a major label. All his mates gave him shit for it. And he said, "If I was a good footballer and was asked to play for Celtic or Liverpool, I would because they are the best. But, as a drummer, this is my chance to do the equivalent. Why wouldn't I do it? Phil could be the next Wayne Rooney of drums. Airfix Kits is like stocking the shelves at Sainsburys instead of playing for Liverpool. San Francisco has a lot of well-known, great bands and we are not one of them. Maybe Phil should be playing for one of them..."

Tim: So Scottish Allan, what else do you do outside of being in the band?

McNaughton: I do reviews and a column for *Maximum Rock 'n' roll*.

Tim: How long have you been involved?

McNaughton: Fifteen years.

Tim: That's a long time. Do you still feel passionate about it?

McNaughton: I feel passionate about it in a different way. When I first came here, I'd do anything. I was over there all the time, doing mailorder and hovering—whatever it took. I don't do that much any more. I'm

kind of on the board of directors, to help give a kind of longevity to it, to give context and some history so that mistakes are less likely to be repeated. I feel passionate about *MRR* and I wanna be part of it for as long as it is a thing.

Tim: There aren't as many forty year olds at shows. How have you stayed interested when many people you grew up with or were in bands with aren't involved at all?

McNaughton: A lot of people, even if they're not at punk gigs anymore, they're still doing something vibrant, creative, or culturally relevant.

Tim: Do you think that's just the personalities you gravitate towards?

McNaughton: I'm still into DIY punk, but I'm into a lot of other stuff as well. Maybe that's the difference. When I was younger, punk was the only thing. Now it's maybe ten or twenty percent of what I'm into.

Tim: So maybe the diversity has allowed you to stay involved. Alan, you have your job and kid. How much involvement do you have in punk outside the band?

Kasameyer: Very little. And that's okay. Where I am right now, I have too much else going on. Most shows I go to are shows we play, and I still see the same people from twenty years ago. Some friends have a hard time grasping that concept. Some people who dropped out

to have kids are really stoked I've now joined their secret club.

Tim: What mark are the Airfix Kits going to make?

McNaughton: We're not trying to make a mark. I am happy to do whatever we are able to do. What we get to do—the gigs we play, going to Texas to play—those things are little islands of enjoyment in life. You look forward to these little islands outside your normal life. All it is to me is something for me to do that takes me out of my every day existence, something creative. It's something that's a little oasis of fun, getting out of town, hanging with your friends.

Tim: One of your upcoming shows is going to be on the roof of a tattoo shop in San Francisco. How do you feel about that?

McNaughton: It's gonna be great. Just like that U2 video, or the Beatles on the roof of Abbey road. Brilliant.

Tim: If Airfix had to be compared to one Beatles album which one would it be?

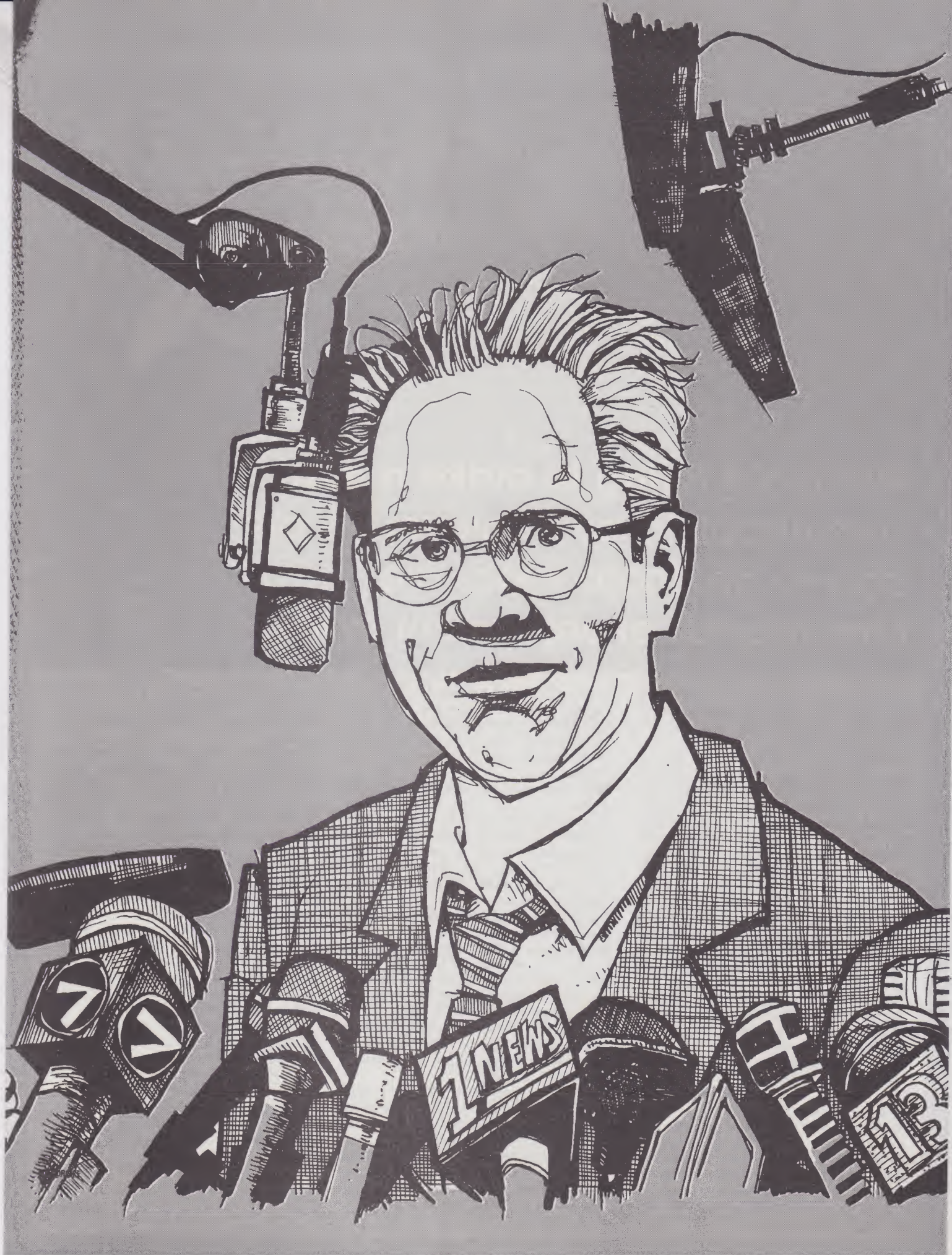
McNaughton: Probably *Best of the Beatles*.

Tim: Phil, if the Airfix Kits were one '70s album which would they be?

McNaughton: *Hits of the '70s*.

Phil: That's what I'd say.

McNaughton: *Now That's What I Call Music...*



ROBERT MCCCHESNEY IS A LEADING MEDIA SCHOLAR. His numerous books and essays are invaluable resources to those interested in learning the history of American media and demonstrate why well-funded, independent journalism is integral to democracy. Corporate buyouts of radio and television stations and newspapers continue to stifle true political and artistic expression. McChesney's writings persuasively argue why this cannot persist and what we, as advocates for a truly free press system, can do to breakup and curb corporate control of media.

Before his career in media studies, McChesney worked in publishing, heading business duties at the Seattle rock magazine, *The Rocket*. Formed in 1979, *The Rocket* was a hotbed of creativity. Cartoonist Matt Groening and Lynda Barry worked at the rag; rock critic Ann Powers and author Dennis Eichhorn also contributed. Although McChesney worked strictly as a publisher, his business direction ensured *The Rocket's* early success and longevity. Over time, *The Rocket* played a vital role in the development of the Seattle music scene and the riot grrrl movement in Portland, Oregon.

In 1983, McChesney left *The Rocket* and entered graduate school. Upon completion of his PhD in communications in 1989, McChesney taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the early 1990s, McChesney began publishing books focused on the political economy and media reform. McChesney's study of the development of radio—an integral component to his landmark work *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* (1999)—challenges the misconception that radio has always been welcomed as an advertising-supported medium. Like Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, McChesney's focus isn't on economic and political elites, but popular movements often neglected in mainstream histories of media. The origins of radio revolve around a popular struggle to keep the medium advertising-free and the property of the people, a fight most people are benighted to today.

In the early 2000s, McChesney acted as editor for the incredible yet overlooked journal, *The Monthly Review*. In addition to teaching communications (currently at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and his frequent essays and books, McChesney also hosts a weekly radio program entitled "Media Matters." In short, McChesney's commitment to media reform and democracy is seemingly indefatigable.

For those new to McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* is a great starting point. *The Political Economy of Media* (2008) is an excellent collection of McChesney's work. His most recent book (with co-author John Nichols) is *The Death and Life of American Journalism*.

ROBERT MCCCHESNEY

"I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A CAPITALIST."

INTERVIEW BY RYAN LEACH / ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANNY MARTIN / LAYOUT BY TODD TAYLOR

Ryan: Since this interview is for a rock magazine, I feel it's only fitting that we talk about your past involvement with rock journalism. You helped with the formation of *The Rocket* in Seattle in the late '70s. There were a lot of really great rock magazines and fanzines coming out at that time, largely reactions to blossoming punk scenes in various cities. In Los Angeles, we had *Slash*, *Back Door Man*, and *Flipside*. How did *The Rocket* come about?

McChesney: In the late '70s I had moved to Seattle from Olympia, where I'd gone to Evergreen State College. In '77 and '78, people were moving to Seattle from all around the country. Relative to other areas, rents were still pretty low. The climate was nice. It was a cool place to go. This was before it became hyper trendy. It was only quasi trendy then. Seattle had been sort

of a backwater city. It was pretty, but kind of parochial and hick-y. I was part of the massive infusion of people coming into the city, largely from the Midwest and the East of the United States. As a result of this massive influx, there was a ton of young talent in the city; people in their twenties who didn't have huge demands to make money and certainly weren't in Seattle to get rich. These people were there to make their marks as artists and writers. That was the milieu of the period.

I had gotten a job at a weekly called the *Seattle Sun*. It was a hip weekly that sort of resembled the *Village Voice*. The *Seattle Sun* was started in the mid-'70s. It cost a quarter. I went to work in their ad department. I was really killing time; I just needed a job. It was the sort of place where within six months I was made publisher. It was a struggling publication, but it had a pretty big impact

within the community. We (McChesney, Bob Newman, and Robert Ferrigno) started *The Rocket* as an offshoot of the *Seattle Sun*. I think we started it in September of 1979. The *Seattle Sun's* art director Bob Newman and art editor Robert Ferrigno thought it would be great to have a music magazine to make the weekly publication cooler. They were both enamored with the punk and new wave scenes springing up.

That wing, with my strong support, started *The Rocket*, which initially was a monthly supplement to the *Seattle Sun*. After six months, it became clear that the marriage between the two publications wasn't perfect. The cultures were different. Robert, Bob, and I placed all of our momentum behind the monthly rock magazine. We saw that was where our immediate future was and where the community was going.

We spun *The Rocket* off as an independent publication in spring, 1980. We didn't charge for it. *The Rocket* was supported by advertising. If I don't say so, that was a brilliant business decision. What it meant was we were able to print up 50,000 copies of every issue of *The Rocket*. Because you had to pay for *The Sun*, it had a limited publication. You had to exchange money for it with stores and retailers. *The Sun* had a circulation of about 5,000. We didn't have to worry about collecting money for *The Rocket*. Instantly, we had a much younger and larger readership. The business model worked well and it didn't take long to figure out that was the way to go.

To get back to my point earlier, there were a lot of talented, young people in Seattle at that time. They were eager to do stuff so we were able to get some great writers—notably Ann Powers and Dennis Eichhorn. Our paid staff was small but they were also important and terrific, too. Almost everyone who worked there for the first four or five years went on to great things. They might not be celebrities, but within writing or art direction they've been successful.

THAT VISION OF JOURNALISM—NEUTRAL AND NON-PARTISAN, "FAIR AND BALANCED," "WE REPORT, YOU DECIDE"—IS ONLY ABOUT ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD. IT'S AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY INVENTION.

The first cartoonists for *The Rocket* were from Evergreen College—Lynda Barry and Matt Groening. *The Rocket* was an exciting publication, but no one was making any money. We certainly weren't getting rich. We didn't realize at the time what was happening below the surface and our role in it. When we started in 1979, there was some artsy groups doing stuff, but they were inconsequential in the grand scheme of things. By the mid-80s, the scene changed dramatically. What role *The Rocket* played in that, I would be presumptuous to make any claims. Certainly the magazine was part of the music scene of the late '80s and early '90s.

Ryan: I was too young and living too far south to catch *The Rocket*, but I do know that in addition to covering the Seattle scene, you also had distribution and writers in Portland. Not only was *The Rocket* hospitable to the emerging Sub Pop label, it was also the first to cover some of the riot grrrl bands forming in Portland.

McChesney: Sub Pop was part of *The Rocket*. It was a column (by Sub Pop co-owner Bruce Pavitt). The label really came later. The key to understanding *The Rocket*'s impact would be to focus on the years 1980 through 1988.

Take someone like Kurt Cobain. He was living in Grays Harbor, Washington—some godforsaken place. He was getting *The Rocket* at his local record store every month. Kids like him were reading about bands and artists they'd never heard of before. The influence came earlier in the process. I think *The Rocket* provided a sense that there was a sort of scene happening.

Ryan: In your later writings you discuss the importance of non-profit media, particularly community radio. Non-profit organizations are sometimes investments that take years to pay off. We don't see the results immediately. Inadvertently, that's sort of the process you've just described with *The Rocket*.

McChesney: I have to confess something—your readers might not like hearing this—but I got into *The Rocket* not for sake of the Seattle music scene. I was exclusively interested in setting up a publication that would work. I wanted people to get together to produce something of value. I was opportunistic in my relationship to the music scene. I would've done a sports or news magazine as well. It had to be interesting, though. I was a publisher, not an editor. I wanted to get

cover the most bland pop acts, but they did need to give in sometimes.

Ryan: You've mentioned going back to graduate school and selling your shares in *The Rocket*. For decades you've focused on media concerns. Was this something that you were deeply interested in prior to starting *The Rocket*?

McChesney: Oh, yeah. When I was in college I was very political. I had studied history and economics. I was in a milieu of people in the early and mid-'70s who were very politically and intellectually engaged and were on the political left. By the end of my college days, some things became relatively clear to me. One was that the political revolution wasn't going to be happening anytime soon. When I entered college in 1971, it was pretty unclear where the country and the world were going; dramatic social change might be in the offing. It wasn't quite the feeling one had in '68 or '69, but that was the environment we were in, being youthful and conceited with youth. There was a tremendous sense that things for the better could be coming. We were living in historically charged times. However, by the mid-'70s, it became somewhat clear that that

something accomplished. That's what *The Rocket* was about for me. That's probably the reason why I left after three or four years. I went to graduate school and eventually sold my interest in it.

Ryan: Nevertheless, you helped with the production of a culturally-rich product.

McChesney: Probably because I had nothing to do with it. I was smart enough as a publisher to let these really talented people do what they were going to do. My only wade in was in periodic moments where I'd say, "Hey, we need to make some money here." And the writers would say, "Okay, we'll cover a few more arena bands when they come into town to make the labels and record stores happy." We wanted to keep receiving their ads. Our editorial policies were clearly influenced by commercial pressures. Most of our writers and editors wanted to cover relatively obscure bands and had little interest in the corporate rock bands of that era. However, the obscure bands only appealed to a small portion of our readership, mostly those living around high schools and college campuses. So we had to do stuff to attract a broader readership and attract money—throw bones to some of the larger acts. Our editors were never going to

moment was passing and we were entering into something different. Those of us on the left realized we were going to have to start digging in for the long haul.

As part of that process, I thought about going to graduate school to plan for a lifetime commitment to social change. I intended to study economics. It was a passion of mine and I wanted to receive my PhD in the subject. There were only a handful of economics graduate schools in the '70s. It's changed since, but then you could study political economy as well as Marxist and radical economics. You could study economics outside of the narrowly-crafted, increasingly mathematical mainstream approach. However, when I looked at the programs that allowed for these approaches, they largely struck me as being dominated by pretentious, Marxist jargon. It didn't connect with me or seem of much use. I decided to postpone graduate school. Instead I moved to Seattle with my buddies and tried to make a life there.

By the time I was thirty, I realized that I had accomplished what I'd set out to do. I had been able to start a publication that was fairly successful and fun. I learned a great deal. But

I hit a point where I was going to have to become a full-bore capitalist and expand *The Rocket* by putting it into other cities—what we call “markets.” We did that in Portland. I faced the possibility of making *The Rocket* a national publication. Maybe after my time with the paper I’d get a job in television, become an impresario, entrepreneur, capitalist—pick your term—and make that my life. Or I could do something else. I didn’t want to be a capitalist. I learned what I wanted to learn running *The Rocket*. I was happy with that stage of my life. I decided to go back to graduate school in 1983. I had given up on the field of economics. It didn’t look any better to me. As a result of *The Rocket*, my interest in media and communication increased. I didn’t want to leave Seattle. And there was a PhD program at the University of Washington, so it seemed like a natural place to go.

Ryan: Moving on to your work in media studies, you often reference James Madison and Thomas Jefferson’s views that a vibrant press is integral to democracy. With that in mind, how has the American press changed over time? Take, say, the press of the mid-19th century and compare it to the press of the mid 20th century.

McChesney: Most Americans—including people who study media as well as the layperson—think that freedom of the press is based on objective, professional journalism: “Just the facts, ma’am.” This is what we’ve told our news media do. In fact, that vision of journalism—neutral and non-partisan, “fair and balanced,” “we report, you decide”—is only about one hundred years old. It’s an early 20th century invention. Gradually, over the previous fifty years, it inched its way there, but objective journalism didn’t crystallize until after World War I. So what did we have for journalism before World War I? We had stridently partisan journalism. Partisan is a word that has sort of a dirty tinge to it today, but what “partisan” literally means is “connected with political parties.” Partisan journalism was the vision of journalism that was dominant throughout the 19th century. The research that I’ve done, especially in the last book that I wrote with John Nichols (*The Death and Life of American Journalism*), is to try to understand how Americans today should understand the journalism crisis in America.

We’re currently at a point where commercial journalism is disintegrating before our eyes. It’s in absolute freefall collapse. The business model is going away. What we’re left with now is just a small smidgen of what is necessary for our constitutional system to work so that there’s some semblance of self government. So how do we understand the crisis in journalism? In our view (McChesney and Nichols), we have to go back to the beginning of American history and understand the role the press played then. We have to look at the founding documents and the period through



THERE'S NOTHING IN THE FREE MARKET THAT DICTATED THAT ONE COMPANY OWN 1,200 RADIO STATIONS. THAT'S PURELY POLICY. IT'S A GOVERNMENT-CREATED INDUSTRY.

the 19th century. We need to learn how the founders—the framers of this country—solved the problem of requiring journalism, or what they called the fourth estate, to have a free society.

The first thing that was striking to John (Nichols) and I when we were researching early American history was that it was taken for granted—it wasn't even debated—that the first duty of a free society was to make sure you had a credible, independent free press. The whole system wouldn't work unless people were informed so they could participate and that required a press system. It was considered mandatory. The second thing that was striking to us in our research was that there was no illusion at that time that the market, capitalists, or advertisers would ever have any incentive, capacity, or desire to provide the caliber of journalism necessary, in regards to both the amount and quality required. The founders instituted massive public subsidies to create a newspaper system. This was done primarily through postal subsidies. All newspapers and news magazines were sent through the mail; they received this service for virtually free to encourage publication.

on the importance of the press were very class oriented.

James Madison was a student of history and the "classics"—Greek and Latin. He understood that Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic both collapsed for one primary reason: They were military empires constantly at war and it was impossible to reconcile being constantly at war and having an open, free society. Something had to give. He was deeply concerned with America following this destructive path. We were a country already sitting on top of this goldmine continent—that wasn't encumbered with the limitations and restrictions of feudal Europe—and it was clear to Madison, and I think all of the framers, that it was only a matter of time before the United States became a dominant country in the world.

History demonstrated in the case of Athens and Rome that a benevolent, elected government—no matter how great and democratic it is—when you're sitting on top of a country that is huge and powerful, invariably, there's going to be a strong temptation to become a global superpower. It leads to militarism, plutocracy, secrecy, and

would outnumber those with property, which would lead to outcomes unfavorable to people of his class. You're correct. But the insights of Madison and Jefferson are not undermined by their contradictions and flaws. It's actually elevated because people with these flaws understood these notions. It shows how central these concerns are to anyone with any honest hope for democratic self-government and the rule of law.

Ryan: In *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, you describe the hardships progressive voices faced once corporations and the FCC became involved with radio in the 1930s. There's a point you stress in the book that most people take for granted today—just who owns the airwaves in America?

McChesney: The airwaves are public property, just like oxygen. No corporation owns the air you breathe. At least not yet. They probably would if they could figure out a way to buy it. The same thing is true of the airwaves. You can't really buy them. They have to be protected by the government. You have to have the state sort of artificially say, "You own this station." They protect the stations.

THERE'S A GREAT LINE IN POLITICS THAT DESCRIBES HOW POLICIES ARE MADE. IT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS, "IF YOU'RE NOT AT THE TABLE, YOU'RE WHAT'S BEING SERVED," MEANING IF YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, YOU'RE LIKELY GOING TO BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

Another point that really jumped out as us was the founders' obsession with journalism and newspapers. Part of it was the electoral system required it. Newspapers were the voice of politicians. People didn't travel on campaigns. That's how politicians and people communicated.

The other part necessary to understanding the origins of journalism in this country would be to focus on James Madison's and Thomas Jefferson's writings. They were the two framers who devoted the most energy to the issue of freedom of the press and what it meant for a free society. In Jefferson's case, his argument was very simple. He said that the only way you can have political equality in a society where you have economic inequality—where you have some rich and some poor—the only way poor people can effectively participate is if they have information equality. They need a press system that gives them the information they need to govern their own lives. In Jefferson's view, if you do not have a credible, free press system, invariably you'd end up with a situation like the one in Europe at that time. He described Europe as a place where the wolves devour the sheep—wolves being rich people, sheep being poor people. His views

corruption. In Madison's view, the crucial role of the press system was to give people the information they needed to prevent their country from becoming a military empire. With endless foreign wars, the republic couldn't survive. Why I've spent so much time explaining this is because if you look at what remains of the news media today, the two major concerns of Jefferson and Madison for the survival of the republic—fighting economic inequality and ending ceaseless foreign wars and militarism—they're the two greatest problems in our society and the two greatest failures of our news media.

Ryan: As Charles Beard wrote, the framers of the Constitution were socially and economically elite men, as were the majority of the founders. Yet the viewpoints of Madison and Jefferson you've just presented would seem rather radical to the dying news media you've described.

McChesney: Yes. These were complex figures. We acknowledge that Madison and Jefferson are hardly flawless men. They were both slave owners. Both had deeply conflicted ideas with not only slavery but equality and inequality. Madison famously wrote that he was not in favor of universal suffrage because the property-less people

The airwaves, like air and water, belong to the people as a whole. They're to be managed for the benefit of the people through the democratically elected government. We're supposed to give the values we want to our elected leaders and they're supposed to implement policies that best reflect the ones we the people have agreed upon. That's the theory. In practice, it doesn't quite work out that way. Anyone who has lived in the United States for more than two minutes quickly understands that.

Our governing system is disproportionately controlled by commercial interests. Broadcasting is exhibit A of commercial interests controlling public property. The airwaves in the United States began much like the Internet in the 1990s—sort of a Wild West of websites. That's how radio broadcasting was in the first half of the 1920s. When commercial interests realized in approximately 1926 that you could make a ton of money by stringing together stations all across the country into networks and then sell national advertising for commercial purposes, it was like a light went on at Wall Street. That's when NBC and CBS formed and became huge powers almost overnight. These broadcasters became large

extraordinarily quickly. At that point they pushed to rewrite the laws of the country. They basically converted radio broadcasting into a network-dominated, advertising-supported medium.

Ryan: It's interesting because when radio first formed, it had really esoteric programming on it, like radio stations in New York broadcasting totally in Yiddish. These were really unique stations. Then regulation comes in and the left basically fell into two groups which you describe in *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*. There was one group, NCER, that wanted radio totally for the people, by the people. The second group, NACRE, was more pliable to commercial interests. Ultimately, the former failed and promises made to public radio were forgotten by commercial interests. This is an important lesson for progressive voices to heed, especially with consideration to the Internet. You see history sort of repeating itself seventy-five years later.

McChesney: Absolutely. The reason I wrote about radio broadcasting was that it presented a new opportunity and fresh start. There was no presumption on how radio should go when it came out in 1919 or 1920. It wasn't like it was clear that we're going to have networks with advertising. As late as 1926 or 1927, very few Americans had any idea that what would be locked in within five years was the "American system" of radio—certainly not in 1924 when then Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover said it would be awful to let advertising on radio. He felt it would be an immoral and unethical misuse of this wonderful resource. My work has been on documenting how this commercial system quickly evolved and capturing the tremendous opposition that emerged in its wake by displaced broadcasters, community groups, labor, religious groups, women's groups—groups and individuals who were really all across the political spectrum. They felt commercial radio was an absurdly corrupt system that they aimed to stop. The moral of the story was media systems were the results of public policies. They were the results of fights and struggles. We have a right and a duty to participate in these policy struggles. If we don't, we're going to be left with a system that's going to serve the interests of those who make the policies. History shows that, politically, it likely won't be to our advantage. There's a great line in politics that describes how policies are made. It goes something like this, "If you're not at the table, you're what's being served," meaning if you're not involved in the negotiations, you're likely going to be taken advantage of.

Ryan: In one of your essays in *The Political Economy of Media*, you discuss that Canadians in the 1930s used American commercial radio not as a system to follow,



LEE DE FOREST, THE FATHER OF RADIO, HATED ADVERTISING SO MUCH THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THE FATHER OF RADIO.

broadcasting—of having advertising marinate programming—wasn't supported by Americans. People liked the programming, the comedy shows and music, but few in the late '20 and early '30s embraced obnoxious commercial interruptions. Americans were very open to developing a system that would give them a range of interesting shows without any advertising on it. That was a prospect most Americans were very excited about. The hatred toward broadcast advertising was quite intense.

To follow up on that point, it's almost impossible today for a person—especially an American—to understand just how obnoxious and radical radio commercials struck someone in the late '20s. These advertisements were so much different than ads in a magazine where you could just turn the page. This notion came to me in the early '70s. I had dropped out of college and spent some time in Asia. I hadn't watched much television for a couple of years. I remember coming back to the States in '73; I was going to Evergreen College then. I didn't have a television, but during the Watergate scandal

tube that detects and amplifies radio signals) and generally recognized as the father of radio—hated advertising so much that he didn't want to be recognized as the father of radio. He actually spent time in the early 1930s trying to invent a device that would automatically mute advertisements on the radio. He wanted to make it technologically impossible for advertisements on the radio to exist. I think that was the standard response at that time to adverts on the radio. We have trouble accepting that today because we're so used to it.

Leach: Philo Farnsworth, an important figure in the development of television, felt the same way about commercial television broadcasting. Reportedly, he only felt his invention was worthwhile when he witnessed the moon landing near the end of his life. Speaking of alternatives to commercial broadcasting—how does funding for public broadcasting in the United States compare to comparable nations in Europe?

McChesney: This is actually an issue John Nichols and I talk about in our new book. We have charts and data on it. It's quite

commercial guys are doing such a great job at giving us what we want that we don't have to spend any money on public broadcasting. Now that the commercial system is disintegrating, especially for journalism, I think we can shelve that argument and take a look at what other countries that have much more successful, democratic systems are doing.

Another good point, and this returns to something we talked about earlier, is that we might want to look at our own history. Before advertising came along providing one hundred percent of revenues for news media in the United States—something that has gone on for about 125 years—we had a vibrant news media without much advertising. But it wasn't a free-market media system. It depended on huge postal and printing subsidies to survive. It gave us an extraordinarily rich and diverse media.

In part of our research for *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, John Nichols and I went back and computed the value of the federal government's postal and printing subsidies in support of journalism at the first half of the 19th century and brought them up

THE TWO MAJOR CONCERNS OF JEFFERSON AND MADISON FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE REPUBLIC—FIGHTING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND ENDING CEASELESS FOREIGN WARS AND MILITARISM—THEY'RE THE TWO GREATEST PROBLEMS IN OUR SOCIETY AND THE TWO GREATEST FAILURES OF OUR NEWS MEDIA.

I was catching the TV coverage when a commercial came on. It was like a two-by-four had hit me in the head. The tone of the ad was so weird. I had lost my natural acceptance of the television pitch as a normal state of affairs. It was jarring for about ten seconds, but then I got used to it again. That was something that alerted me to just how jarring radio advertising must have felt to someone in the 1920s. Today, to criticize commercial advertising or understand that as possible is like the proverbial fish in water: we barely notice it because advertisements are so dominate in our lives.

Leach: That's a good point. The range of opinion on the radio then was so much greater, too. You had labor unions with radio stations. Advertisements had to have felt really awful. One essay I read back in graduate school likened radio advertisements to an invasion of the home. People didn't want their home to become an area saturated with commercial messages. It was deemed inappropriate.

McChesney: Yeah. And this was before you had the remote control. They didn't have DVRs. To give you some sense of just how hated radio commercials were, Lee De Forest—the inventor of the Audion (vacuum

extraordinary. The United States Federal Government currently spends roughly \$400,000,000 supporting public radio, public TV, and community radio—that means the Pacifica radio stations and NPR. These stations are very dependent on this money. With that in mind, we took \$400,000,000 and compared it to the budget allocated in other countries.

If we were to spend on a per capita basis—factoring in population size—similar amounts to every other major industrial democracy in the world, we would have to spend at a bare minimum—just to get to where South Korea and Canada are at—fifteen or twenty times the current amount. We'd have to spend six billion dollars instead of \$400,000,000. If we wanted to get to where Great Britain or Germany is, we'd have to spend twenty-five billion dollars. If we wanted to get to where countries that even conservative industries rank as the most democratic in the world, by far—that also means in terms of commercial media—places like Iceland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden—we'd have to spend thirty-five billion dollars. The point is we barely spend anything on supporting public broadcasting.

One argument raised again and again over the last fifty years is that because our

to date—so the same percentage of GDP per subsidy in 1840 updated for 2010. The figure we came up with was around thirty billion dollars. You look at the most democratic countries in the world and they're making strong commitments to support independent, non-profit, non-commercial media. It's the price of admission to being a free society.

In America, we have the argument that subsidies will lead to government control and censorship in the vein of Stalin's Russia or Nazi Germany. I think that's a very legitimate concern. I'd be the last one to allow any politician of any persuasion to have the power to dictate who runs media and who doesn't. But Europe and our own history show that it is very possible to craft policies that minimize that threat and maximize the positive benefits of having competitive, independent, well-funded media.

Leach: In your work, you've mentioned ideas that would aid in media reform. One was allowing for a two hundred dollar tax credit people could use to support a non-profit media organization of their choice. This is needed more than ever, seeing as how far gone broadcast radio in the United States is at the moment. What are some other proposals?

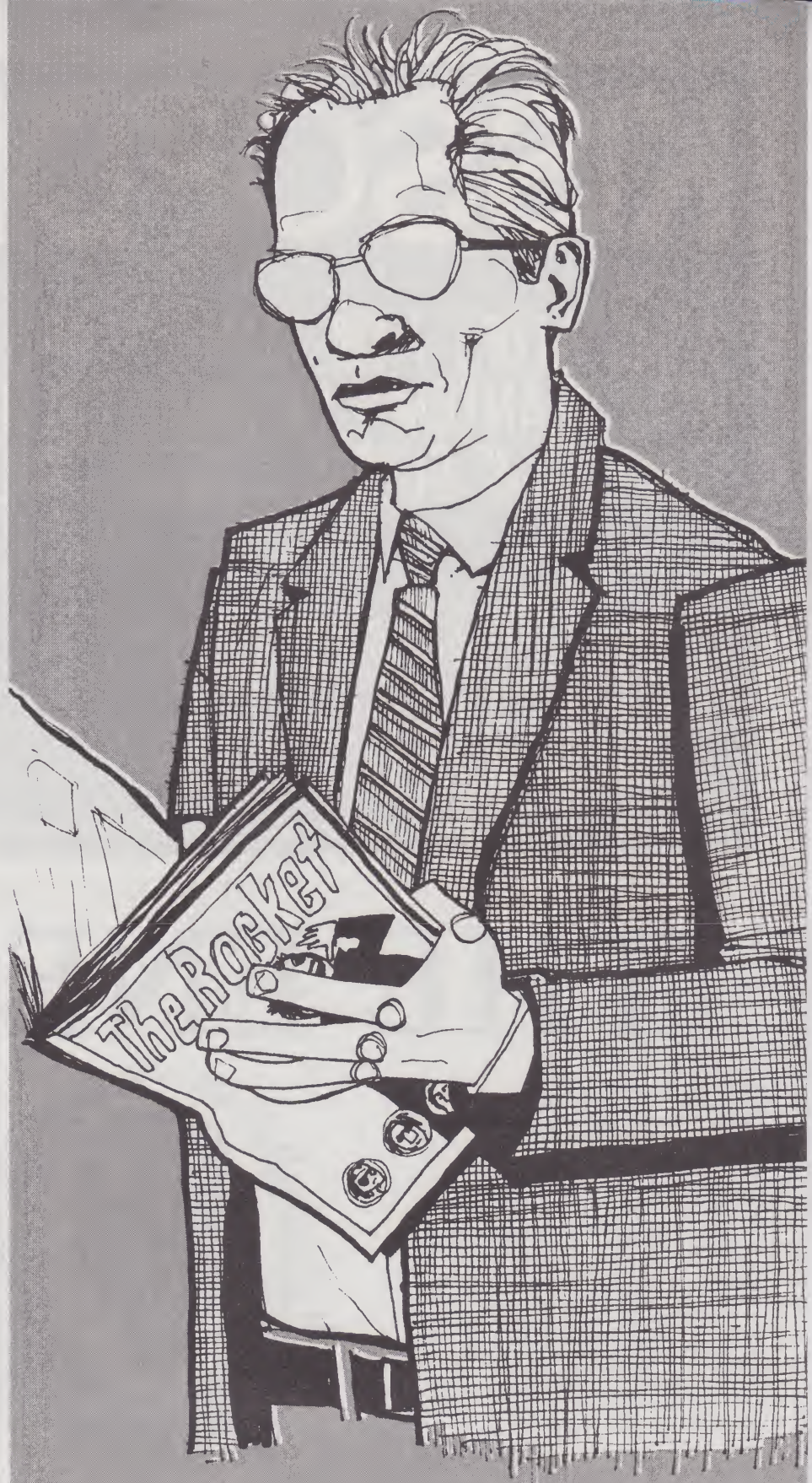
McChesney: I'd like to mention two things on policies and issues we need to fight on. First of all, in the case of radio, radio has been completely destroyed by policies that have allowed single companies to gobble up as many stations as they want. Clear Channel owns over 1,200 stations. It's an absurd situation.

Radio is fairly inexpensive to produce compared to other media. It's the ideal medium for poor communities. Owning a radio is not very costly. And because radio's costs are so low, it's ideally suited for local ownership, local management, and local programming. It's the dream local medium. But because of the power of corporate radio lobbies, radio has been converted into this strip-mine, one-owner-owns-all medium. It's been gutted of localism and destroyed in the last fifteen years. There's no justification for it economically. There's no rational explanation as to why one company should own 1,200 radio stations.

We could set up simple rules. One being you can only own one radio station. You can only own as many radio stations as you can listen to at one time. After all, it's public property. These are licenses companies get to have monopoly access to public airwaves. You need these licenses to operate. If we actually had a rule allowing only one radio station per person, it would do wonders for music. It would mean suddenly in a midsized city like Portland, Oregon that instead of having thirty-five or forty radio stations owned by three or four companies—all of whom have large empires all over the country with very little local staff and adhere to regimented formats determined by ad departments in central headquarters to hit their target demographics—you'd have thirty-five radio stations in Portland owned by thirty-five different people. If you could only own one radio station, the prices of stations would plummet.

They tell us radio is a dying medium, but it has a lot more life in it than people give it credit for. If there were 1,000 radio stations that Clear Channel had to get rid of, then maybe you and a bunch of your friends could buy one wherever you're living. It wouldn't cost that much. The production costs of radio are so low, too. You could play local artists and have shows on it. It would take this corporate chokehold off of radio. It might not be perfect, but it would get radio doing what it should be doing—acting as the preeminent local medium.

Of course, it's also ideally suited for being a musical medium. Music has been so heavily regimented, it's absurd. That's the policy people should fight for. There's nothing in the free market that dictated that one company own 1,200 radio stations. That's purely policy. It's a government-created industry. These are government-issued monopolies given to companies of scarce airwaves. The corporate community can go other places to gobble stuff up; they



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can leave radio alone. Ironically, the profits are going down in radio. They're seeing it as a dying medium. These corporations have run it into the ground and stripped it for parts. Now it's time to push them off the road and take it over again.

The other issue that you referred to concerning tax credits is something that I'm a big fan of. It was developed by a wonderful economist named Dean Baker. Brilliantly, Dean over a decade ago said that as people move over to the digital system, the entire logic of commercial media systems becomes undermined and increasingly counterproductive. Previously, people would produce a product, sell it to advertisers, and then sell it to the public. In a digital world that's not going to work. You're not going to be able to put barbed wire everywhere and you're not going to make enough money to make it work.

local concerns and local music broadcast over the radio instead of someone like Don Imus. People would be so much more engaged in their community if radio had local ownership.

McChesney: Yeah. And there are plenty of places for people like Don Imus, Sean Hannity, and Rush Limbaugh. They can go on Fox News or some other national cable channel. They can bombard us there. Let the local people have a shot. Maybe some of them will be jerkoffs like Imus, but at least they'll be local jerkoffs.

Leach: As you've mentioned, knowing the history of media and understanding how policies are made is so crucial for those interested in democracy. As we've seen with radio, once you let the genie out of the bottle, it's not going back in. With that in mind, can you discuss the importance of net neutrality?

McChesney: Net neutrality is certainly the ante to admission to having a credible

interests. Net neutrality is an absolutely essential fight. Fortunately, right now in Washington, the Democrats in congress have shown their total support for net neutrality. The new FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski backs net neutrality. This prevents these huge corporate behemoths from privatizing the Internet as they're trying to do. However, there's some wavering because there's immense funding being used by the phone and cable companies to buy off politicians. Unfortunately, it's having some success. It's not a done issue yet. We need to redouble our efforts and force these politicians to do what they say they're going to do.

I urge your readers to go to freepress.net—it's a group I helped form which advocates for the public interest in issues like this. The site will show you how you can get informed and how you can get involved. To their credit, musicians have been at the forefront of this issue. Jenny Toomey started a great

IN 1924 THEN SECRETARY OF COMMERCE HERBERT HOOVER SAID IT WOULD BE AWFUL TO LET ADVERTISING ON RADIO. HE FELT IT WOULD BE AN IMMORAL AND UNETHICAL MISUSE OF THIS WONDERFUL RESOURCE.

So Dean said the rational way to set up our media system is to pay people in advance for their work and have them distribute it for free on the Internet. This would enable a vibrant, open public sector, with large amounts of material in the public domain. People would have access to this information for free in the digital world. You need to pay your musicians and journalists so there's good content online. That's a social problem we have to solve. Dean's recommendation was that every American be given the right to allocate a certain amount of money—I put it at two hundred dollars—to support a non-profit, non-commercial medium of their choice. The only condition put on the medium is that whatever they produce is made instantly available for free online. There are a lot different ways to spin this. Say you're a musician with a band. You might get 10,000 people to give you their \$200 voucher if you're formally a non-profit and whatever you produce you can put online for free with that money. But you can support yourself. Or you could try it with a radio station. However, we've thought about it primarily in terms of news media and supporting journalism.

Leach: It would be so empowering to have radio stations owned be people in your community. I definitely support that idea of only owning as many stations as you can listen to at one time. Voter turnout is so low; people are so disenfranchised. As C. Wright Mills had written so long ago, people are really atomized. It'd be so liberating to hear

Internet as a progressive or democratic force in society. It doesn't solve all of the problems, but if you don't have net neutrality, nothing else matters. Basically, what net neutrality means is that the big broadband providers—the phone and cable companies—cannot privatize the Internet. They can't turn the Internet into cable television, dictating what websites are allowed to come through and which ones aren't. All websites have to be created equal, whether it's yours, mine, or Rupert Murdoch's. That's actually how the Internet has been run, which is why people sometimes have trouble understanding the importance of net neutrality.

The genius of the Internet was that it had to adopt the old, common carrier roles of the telephone system. It has had to treat all websites equally. Everything good about the Internet has been the result of that policy. It prevents huge corporations from cherry picking websites or determining which ones come through quickly and which ones come through slowly. The phone and cable companies understandably hate that policy. As soon as they can shake down people by saying, "Hey, if you want the fast lane, you're going to have to pay me an extra bit of money to get your website through"—that's a source of immense profits for them. I don't blame these companies for trying. It's smart capitalism.

The guilty parties here are the policymakers being bought off to serve their

group called the Future of Music Coalition (futureofmusic.org). They have been one of the top two or three groups spreading these ideas. This coalition understands that having musicians pay an extra toll to some cable or phone company to get their sites through is as an unacceptable corporate intrusion; it's censorship over content.

Even if we were to win net neutrality—and until recently I thought it was a slam dunk, but I had underestimated the banality and corruption of our public officials and the powers of these lobbies, an incredible feat considering my general skepticism—we still have our work cut out for us. That doesn't mean we have the resources for journalism. It doesn't mean that we won't have invasions of privacy. There are still a large number of fights we have yet to win. But network neutrality is crucial. If that's lost, we're in a deep ditch and we won't get out of it for a long time.

robertmchesney.com
freepress.net
<http://will.illinois.edu/mediamatters>

For more on *The Rocket*, check out former contributor Cortney Harding's presentation on the rise and fall of the magazine: seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5010723



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Andy Conway

1. Joyce Manor, Self-titled LP
2. The Boston Strangler, *Outcast* tape
3. Watching the 1992 WWF Royal Rumble
4. RVIVR, Self-titled LP
5. Left For Dead, *Splitting Heads* LP

Aphid Peewit

- OFF!, *First Four EPs*, 7" box set
- Poison Idea, *Latest Will & Testament* CD
- Grabbies, *Hate Delirium Fucks My Brain* LP
- GG Allin & Tiny Tim, *Two American Legends* split 7"
- David Loy, *The World Is Made of Stories* (book)

Art Ettinger

- 45 Adapters, *Don't Trust Anyone Who Doesn't Dance* 7"
- Oh Shit They're Going To Kill Us, *Cryptozoological Attack* LP
- Klasse Kriminale, *Oi! Una Storia* LP
- Thermals, *Not Like Any Other Feeling* 7"
- Geoff Useless, *Don't Stop* CD

Bill Pinkel

- Young Offenders, *Leader of the Followers* LP
- Mind Spiders, Self-titled LP
- By All Means, Do Ya Hear We? Compilation LP
- Joyce Manor, Self-titled LP
- Tie between Mean Jeans "R U Mental" / White Wires "Please Write" split 7"
- and Shang-A-Lang / Broken Mountain split 7"

Candice Tobin

1. Bad Banana, *Crushfield*
2. Billy Raygun, *Seasick* EP
3. Serious Tracers EP
4. Not On Tour, Self-titled
5. The Haverchucks, Demo

Chris Mason

1. Mind Spiders, Self-titled LP
2. White Lung, *It's the Evil* LP

3. Dead Uncles, Self-titled 7"
4. Iron Chic, *Not Like This* LP
5. Crusades, Self-titled 7"

Chris Pepus

- *Motion Sickness* (zine) box set
- *In Celebration* (1975 film version of the play by David Storey)
- *Urban Struggle: The Battle of the Cuckoo's Nest* (film)
- *Beckett on Film* (DVD set)
- *Trumbo* (film)

Craig Horky

- Bedford, *Smiles Are the Batteries*
- Mid Carson July, *Ten Years on Autopilot*
- Canine Sugar, *Canine Sugar Goes for a Walk*
- So Adult, *Rookie*
- The Fullerenes, *Better Dating through Technology*

Craven Rock

1. Go, Egypt, Go!
2. Knifey Spooniey, *Animal Pleasures* demo cassette
3. *Shiny Things on the Ground* (zine)
4. Dalek, *Gutter Tactics* CD
5. Scared Of Chaka, *Hutch Brown Sangwyech* LP

CT Terry

- Ultra Dolphins, *Alien Baby* LP
- HTRK, *Marry Me Tonight* LP
- Kanye West, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* LP (I know, I know...)
- J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (book)
- Sharon made me a website: ChrisLTerry.com

Danny Spit

1. Tyler the Creator, *Bastard*
2. Scared Of Chaka, *Masonic Youth*
3. Tera Melos, *Patagonian Rats*
4. Earl Sweatshirt, *Earl*
5. What Happens Next?, *Stand Fast Armageddon Justice Fighter*

Daryl Gussin

- Dirty Marquee, Self-titled 7"
- ADD/C, *Busy Days* LP
- Dark Rides, Self-titled 7"
- Foreign Objects, *A Kind of Life* 7"
- Hot New Mexicans, Self-titled LP

Dave Williams

1. Ghost, *Opus Eponymous* LP
2. Burzum, *Fallen* LP
3. Coven, *Witchcraft* LP / Black Widow, *Sacrifice* LP
4. Rot In Hell, *As Pearls Before Swine* LP
5. Merciful Fate, Self-titled / Melissa / *Don't Break the Oath*

Designated Dale

1. Lemmy: 49% Motherfucker, 51% Son of a Bitch—a real look into one of the most real dudes left in rock'n'roll. This film has been a long time coming and is definitely not to be missed.
2. Throw Rag at Alex's Bar 11th Anniversary Show in Long Beach. And just when you think it couldn't get any crazier, Larry May of The Candy Snatchers jumps up on stage with 'em for a fiery version of "Rocket in My Pocket." God damn!
3. Saxophone-induced tunes that make you wanna kick holes in the drywall brought to you by artists like Rocket From The Crypt, The Saints, and Little Richard.
4. Having reliable co-workers who flagged security down after some stupid fuck who tried splitting after she backed into (and plowed) the side of my truck in the parking structure. You rule, Kevin and Bobby!
5. Last but not least, the Ramones getting a Lifetime Achievement Grammy after all these years, and a big fuck you to whoever was in charge and didn't see fit to have it included in the live broadcast besides some three second blurb. Shame on you.

Ever a.k.a The Girl About Town

- The Muffs at Spaceland (It will always be Spaceland to me.)
- Sourpatch, Self-titled 7"
- *Destroy All Movies* (book)
- Paul Collins Beat at The Redwood Bar
- Youth Against at Infest Warehouse

Garret Barnwell

1. Gasoline Grenade / The Mindless Show, split cassette
2. Rad Company / Ships In Masses, split cassette
3. Women In Prison, demo cassette
4. Vacation, *The Do Shit Disc* CD
5. Zero Heroes 7"

Jake Shut

1. The righteous and courageous revolutionaries in Tunisia and Egypt.
2. The Superbowl Champion Green Bay Packers
3. Motörhead, *The World Is Yours*
4. Three Musketeers Truffle Crisp Bars
5. Electric Wizard, *Black Masses*

Jeff Proctor

1. Samiam, Tiltwheel at Alex's Bar, Long Beach 12/29
2. Death Crisis, Stalins Of Sound at Kensington Club, San Diego 01/29
3. Les Savy Fav at Echoplex, Los Angeles 02/04
4. Nobunny, Shannon And The Clams, the Widows, Mexico City Rollers at Til-Two, San Diego 02/12
5. Sebadoh, Quasi at the Echoplex, Los Angeles 02/25

Jennifer Federico

1. A-Frames, *Black Forest*
2. White Lung, *It's the Evil*
3. Liars, *Sisterworld*
4. Cactus, Self-titled
5. Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *Rush to Relax*

Joe Evans III

- Nick Flanagan, *I'm Here All Weak* CD
- Cometbus #54
- Burrito Reich, live
- Liquor Store, *Free Pizza* 7"
- Community

Juan Espinosa

- Big Crux, *Is a Big Funk* 7"
- Vaccine, Demo 7"
- Urban Blight, *Total War* 7"
- Low Threat Profile, *Product Number Two* LP
- Bastard Noise / Despise You / Brutal Truth / Lack Of Interest, live at the Boulevard.

Keith Rosson

- The Sainte Catherines, *Fire Works* CD
- *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned* by Wells Towers (short story collection)
- Bread And Water, *Everything So Far* CD
- Lost Tribe, *The Dawn* cassette
- Images, *Five* cassette

Kurt Morris

1. Misfits, *Collection I*
2. Misfits, *Collection II*
3. M83, *Saturdays = Youth*
4. Ethel Meserve, *Spelling the Names*
5. Les Savy Fav, *Let's Stay Friends*

Passing out in
Less Than Jake's
tour bus in Milwaukee.

Lauren Measure

Bands I'm Excited about Right Now

1. Aye Nako (ex-fleabag, best demo I've ever heard)
2. Very Okay
3. Dead Ringer
4. Hot Mess
5. Foreign Objects

Lucky Nakazawa

Top 5 Qualifications to Work for Razorcake

1. Sleep with someone in Dillinger Four.
2. Publicly have a drinking problem.
3. "Considering" going to grad school.
4. Think that Ben Snakepit draws really well.
5. Be Asian. Asians own Razorcake.

Maddy Tight Pants

1. Magic Kids, *Memphis LP*
2. Nobunny, *First Blood LP*
3. Marked Men, *The Other Side 7"*
4. Unko Atama, *Another Creature CD*
5. *Ghosts of Ready Reference #4* zine by R. John Xerxes

Marcos Siref

- Human Baggage, *Two Cities* cassette
- Violent Femmes, *The Blind Leading the Naked*
- No Trend, *More*
- Di Nigunim's 2011 North America Tour
- Spider Fever

Mark Twistworthy

1. Milk Music, *Beyond Living 12"*
2. Getting Dr. Tony Balls to make me a fuzz pedal.
3. MuhammadAli (the band, not the man)
4. Mean Jeans / White Wires, split 7" (both of 'em)
5. Finally getting to see Mean Jeans!

Matt Average

- To Hell And Back, *Will We Be Torn Apart LP*
- Countdown To Armageddon, *Eater of Worlds LP*
- Cola Freaks, Self-titled CD
- Warcollapse, *Crust as Fuck Existence 12"* EP
- Women In Prison, demo cassette

Matt Bloodbath

- Off!, *First Four EPs*
- Forgetters, Street Eaters at The Eagle Rock Center For The Arts
- The 5th Annual Dre Day at The Blue Star
- Grabass Charlestons/Toys That Kill, Split LP
- Against Me!, *White Crosses LP*

Mike Faloon

- Black Wine, *Dark Energy 7"*
- Budos Band, *III LP*

- Mary Halvorson Quintet, *Saturn Sings CD*
- Lisa Mezzacappa's Bait and Switch, *What Is Known CD*
- Midwest Beat, *At the Gates LP*

Mike Frame

1. Swingin Neckbreakers, *Top of the Pops CD*
2. Lemuria, *Pebble LP*
3. Welders, Self-titled 7"
4. Berlin Brats, *Believe It or Rot LP*
5. The Biters, both EPs

MP Johnson

- *Sweet Tooth: In Captivity* by Jeff Lemiere
- Short Fast & Loud 10th anniversary show at Gilman St.
- Sick Of It All at the Triple Rock
- Robyn at First Ave.
- My short story "Clown Underground" appearing in *Out of the Gutter #7*

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. Hot Lixx Hulahan, *Airway to Heaven/Sound of Silence 7"* EP (2008 World Air Guitar Champion's Craigums Billmeier's genius 7" release)
2. Sheeta et les Weissmuller, *Hola Ye-Yeah CD* (Wicked French garage punk crunch!)
3. *Adventures of Power DVD* (The real Ari Gold's comedy about love, air drumming, and the American Dream)
4. *Rock-a-fire Explosion DVD* (Documentary about the animatronic band of animals at Showbiz Pizza Place)
5. Jetwolf, Self-titled CD (Super catchy, bouncy Vancouver BC teenage zit rock angst!)

Nation of Amanda

Top 5 Worst Types of Customers at My Restaurant...

1. Picky church ladies with big hats
2. People who ask for food that isn't on the menu.
3. Teenagers.
4. People with lots of babies.
5. Teenagers with lots of babies.

Nick Toerner

- Vacation, *Dream Dad 7"*
- Tiltwheel, *The High Hate Us LP*
- Lose The Tude, Self-titled 7"
- Statues, *Holiday Cops LP*
- Sloane Peterson, "Knots" b/w "Telephone" 7"

Nighthawk

- Watching the Packers win Super Bowl 45 at Time Bomb Tom's house in Green Bay!
- Sex Robots, *Nightmoves LP*
- Eating nothing but pizza for ten days
- The Jabbers, *American Standard CD*

- Passing out in Less Than Jake's tour bus in Milwaukee

Paul Comeau

1. Zombie Dogs, Self-titled LP
2. Youth Avoiders, *Demo 2010* cassette
3. Supertouch, *The Earth Is Flat LP*
4. H2O, *Nothing to Prove LP*
5. Hoover, *Lurid Traversal of Route 7 CD*

Rene Navarro

1. Muddy Waters, *Can't Be Satisfied DVD*
2. *All Quiet on The Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque
3. The Strangers, *The Early Years 74-76 Rare Live CD*
4. Fucked Up, *Hidden World CD*
5. Kylesa, *To Walk a Middle Course LP*

Replay Dave

- Amateur Party, *Truncheons in the Manor LP*
- ADD/C, *Busy Days LP*
- Cheap Girls / Lemuria 7"
- Post Teens (live)
- Songs For Emma, *Red Lies and Black Rhymes CD*

Rev. Norb

- Eddy J. Lemberger, *Aaron Rodgers Rock & Roll Video/MP3*
- Charlie & The Skunks, *Take an Ice Cream Scoop out of My Brain 7"* EP
- Ramma Lamma, *This Carton Contains 2 x 7"*
- First Base, *I Saw Her First 7"*
- Flesh Lights, *Maybe Baby 7"*

Rhythm Chicken

Top 5 Musical Acts I've Been Enjoying Lately

- Happy Schnapps Combo
- Fugazi
- Dismemberment Plan
- Luna
- Packer fans worldwide singing "The Bears Still Suck Polka" by the Happy Schnapps Combo

Naked Rob

The Thrash Attack, San Francisco

1. Smart Cops, *Cominciare A Vivere 7"* (Italian punk)
2. Jonny Manak And The Depressives, *I Am Not a Bum... I'm a Jerk!* (San Jose punk rock)
3. Total Fucking, *Destruction Haters* (grindcore)
4. Carlton Melton, Self-titled 7" (SF psych rock)
5. *Short Fast & Loud 10"* Comp (thrash/grindcore/hardcore)

Ryan Horky

1. Low Threat Profile, *Product Number Two LP*

2. Paul Simon, *Rhythm of the Saints LP*
3. Jack Palance Band, *Get This Shit Underway LP*
4. Napalm Death, *Utopia Banished LP*
5. Motörhead, *The World Is Yours LP*

Sean Koepenick

Music Books That I Have Recently Checked Out

1. *No Certainty Attached: Steve Kilbey and The Church*, by Robert Dean Lurie
2. *Why Be Something That You're Not—Detroit Hardcore 1979-1985*, by Tony Rettman
3. *Suburban 100-Selected Lyrics*, by Paul Weller
4. *Hell On Wheels—A Tour Story Compilation*, by Greg Jacobs
5. *Touch & Go: The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79-'83*, by Tesco Vee & Dave Stimson

Sal Lucci

- Humpers, *War Is Hell/My Machine CD*
- Parting Gifts, *Strychnine Dandelion LP*
- Natural Child, *White Man's Burden 7"*
- Gentleman Jesse And His Men, *You've Got the Wrong Guy 7"*
- Crisis Hotlines 7"

Steve Hart

Top Five Podcasts

1. Citizen Radio
2. Counterspin
3. The Nerdist
4. The Breakdown
5. Best of the Left

Todd Taylor

- Dark Rides, Self-titled 7" EP
- Rough Kids, "Into the '00s" b/w "So Sophisticated" 7"
- Gestapo Khazi, "Escalators" b/w "The Atomic Kind" 7"
- Dirty Marquee, Self-titled 7" EP
- Nuclear Family, Self-titled 12"
- ADD/C, *Busy Days LP*

Ty Stranglehold

Top 5 "S" Bands

1. SNFU
2. Subhumans (Canada)
3. Sloppy Seconds
4. Snuff
5. Smogtown

Vincent Battilana

- Teenage Fancub, *Bandwagonesque LP*
- Skatelites, *Rollin' On LP*
- Various artists, *Ska-Ba-Dip LP*
- Spacemen 3, *Taking Drugs to Make Music to Take Drugs to 2xLP*
- The Beat, Self-titled LP (Why couldn't I have found the three dollar thrift store copy before I picked up the reissue?! And, yes, I did get the thrift store copy.)



ADAPTIVE REACTION: *Terminal Hate: 7"*

Fairly solid synth punk in the vein of Nervous Gender. Not grabbing me like some of their contemporaries—Nervous Patterns for example—but I am digging the female backing vocals and energy. One thing's for certain: I doubt anyone can question Adaptive Reaction's commitment. This 45 came in a hand-folded sleeve; the record is on colored vinyl and is hand numbered. Fuckin' awesome. —Ryan Leach (Konduktiv Produkt)

ADD/C: *Busy Days: LP*

On its best days, DIY punk is a joyous reaffirmation that there is something worth fighting for in our day-to-day lives, no matter how big and sloppy the shit sandwich we're constantly served is. ADD/C has created an existential—as in, why do we exist? What we do today is more important than yesterday or tomorrow—and soulful record. I've enjoyed past ADD/C records, but *Busy Days* has than earnest, honest ache for communication that doesn't come around all that often. It has many of the earmarks of contemporary Chattanooga DIY punk—gruff, but clear and sung vocals, excellent-but-not-pro-dude tech playing—in line, but clearly far from aping The Hidden Spots, The Jack Palace Band, and The Future Virgins. I know so very little about what records will stick close to others record players for the long haul, but I see *Busy Days*'s chances pretty good that it's going to keep company with Bent Outta Shape's *Stray Dog Town* and The Tim Version's *Decline of the Southern Gentleman* in my household. The record comes beautifully packaged with a full-sized zine lyric sheet and great artwork throughout. —Todd (Mauled By Tigers, mauledbytigers.com; Plan-It-X South)

AGALLOCH: *Marrow of the Spirit: CD*

I've known about Agalloch, the Portland, Oregon based black metal band, for a number of years. I worked with a guy in Seattle who is good friends with them, but beyond the name I didn't really know much of them. I passed them over as just being another dumb black metal band that was "extreme" but lacking any real musical substance. And now I would like to eat my words, as I was severely wrong. What I have come to realize is that Agalloch is a complex four piece that is crafting way more than just some stereotypically evil-sounding music. The six songs that comprise *Marrow of the Spirit* are rich and diverse, especially if you come into this thinking (as I did) that you're only going to hear some growling vocals and heavy guitars. What the sixty-five minutes of music on this album proves

is that Agalloch has a depth to them that is lacking in so many metal bands. They're not afraid of being creative and plumbing a range of sources to make for music that is able to touch a deeper, emotional chord that you'd expect to be hit when you listen to Sigur Rós or something more cold, atmospheric, and dark. While many fans of metal will no doubt hear strains of Isis's later work in *Marrow of the Spirit*, Agalloch offers a wider array of sound than just heavy music mixed with a contrasting growling and singing vocals. There is a good dose of cello, neo-folk guitar work, and crystalline keyboards alongside blast beats and sinister vocals similar to such an act as Gorgoroth. It makes for compelling listening that often crosses the line into beautiful. Songs clocking in at twelve or seventeen minutes don't drag whatsoever. Instead, they're part of a skillful arrangement of ethereal beauty. It's akin to that feeling one gets when they find themselves in a cold, snowy field and the sky stands grey. It's not oppressive or depressing; rather it's a capturing of the notion of environment that makes *Marrow of the Spirit* stand as remarkable in its delivery. —Kurt Morris (profoundlorerecords.com)

ANAGRAM: "Butcher" b/w "Fish": 7"

Another solid outing from Telephone Explosion. "Butcher" is a lo-fi blues-

punk number that's driving. B-side "Fish" carries in the same vein with a surf-punk sound similar to the great and underappreciated New Zealand band, King Loser. A lot of fucking reverb and tremolo...while I can't make out all the lyrics, they're fucking sordid...like something you'd come across in Herbert Huncke's work. Pretty fuckin' rad all the way around. —Ryan Leach (Telephone Explosion, telephoneexplosion.com)

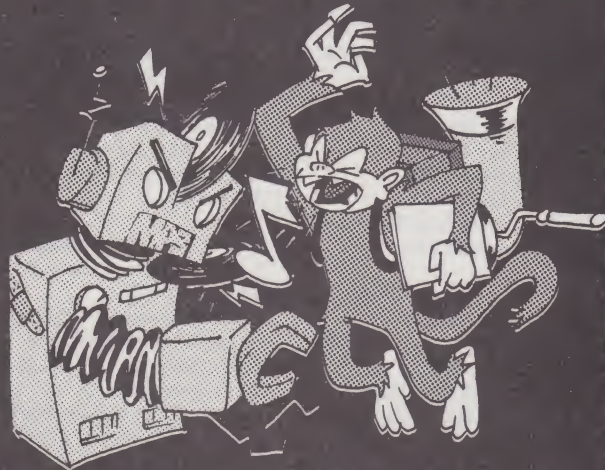
ANAL WARHEAD: *Time to Die: 7"*

It's almost astonishing to think about how many different types of music fall under the umbrella of "hardcore." I knew before hearing it that Anal Warhead would be playing a more fatalistic, spikes and mohawks style, and I wasn't wrong. Fortunately, they do it well. I'd much rather listen to the "nuclear holocaust, kill the pigs" scene than see some joker in a basketball jersey up there calling himself "hawdcoa". This sense of bleak depression somehow makes me a little happy. —Ty Stranglehold (Suburban White Trash)

ASOUND, THE: *Self-titled: CDEP*

Three tunes of sludgy stoner rock with a vocalist who prefers to sing rather than imitate a strangled badger. Gotta appreciate that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tsuguri)

RECORD REVIEWS



"The lyrics are like the polar opposite of a 7 Seconds record (meaning: you're fucked, it's not going to be okay, things are terrible)."

—Keith Rosson

UNFUN: *Pain Prescription: CDEP*

ASSASSINATORS, THE:

I Disse Morke Tider: 7"

So happy that I got my order for this record just in time for review deadline. I have already digitized the music and it's ready to go onto the iPod for high rotation listening. This female-led Danish band has not disappointed me yet. From their first two 7"s to their fantastic LP, followed with a split with Japan's D.S.B., this band has been bringing the goods on a consistent basis. I think there is a LP in the works for the fall and I know for sure they are touring the West Coast this summer. I can never get enough of this band and am so excited to experience them in a live setting. So to tide me over until then, these four new songs are a treat. Their signature melody comes pouring out of the speakers like a close friend. I am easily pulled into familiar territory with their brand of mid-tempo punk that is equally powerful and yet balances the melody to make it a pleasurable listening experience. The consistency of their output makes it easy picking if you want to try out this band. Once you listen, I'm sure you will join the worldwide following. —Donofthedeat (Halo Of Flies)

BACKPOCKET: *What Am I Gonna Do with a Gun Rack?: CD*

Featuring The Measure [SA] alums Tim Burke and J. Nixon, you might be inclined to see this as some sort of punk rock supergroup, which isn't really the case. What you do get are five loosely-recorded tracks (four being actual songs) that are taut, angular, and sometimes jangly affairs of surprising complexity and density. Without using the "E" word, I have to say I haven't heard and read such anguished lyrics like these in quite some time, if ever. I sure hope there was some catharsis in there somewhere when writing and recording this. —Garrett Barnwell (Moonquake)

BAMBOO KIDS, THE:

The Way Things Are: EP

The Bamboo Kids have been at it for close to ten years now, and this new EP of theirs won't disappoint in the least. Fans of The Lazy Cowgirls, Thunders, Dead Boys, and Dramarama alike will dig on this current release from the 'Kids, as will those folks who get off on the *Ziggy Stardust* era of Bowie, and the *Exile On Main St.* era of the Stones. These may sound like some broad strokes I'm painting, yeah, but keep in mind that this trio is no stranger to laying down some of the catchiest, better East Coast rock'n'roll, as their first two full lengths, *The Bamboo Kids* and *This Ain't No Revolution* have proven in the past. *The Way Things Are* hints at a bit

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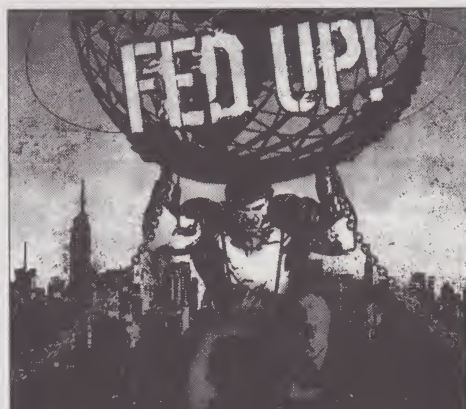
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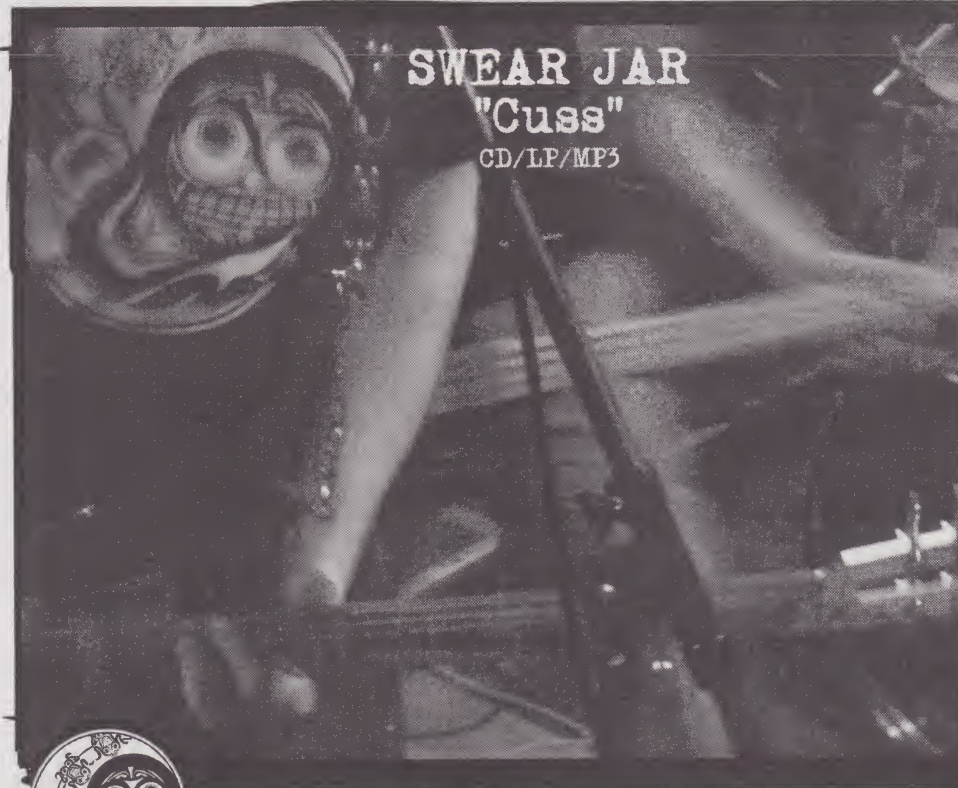


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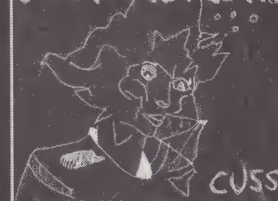


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SWEAR JAR



fans of old-school, underground punk will immediately get what Swear Jar is doing. While most of the songs have a spastic, wild-eyed energy, (akin, in approach, to the hectic, unpredictable roads the Minutemen and Crucifucks paved decades ago) tracks like "Lonely" possess the murky, sludgy grind of later Black Flag, while the sung/shouted vocals on songs like "Old Shake" and "Narcissist Artist" are reminiscent of peak Jesus Lizard and early Butthole Surfers



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more maturity this spin around, but in no way gets diluted along the way, or loses any of the bands' substance, like so many other bands have in the past (and present, unfortunately). Most definitely recommended, and that goes for their entire catalog. —Designated Dale (drugfrontrecords.com)

BENNY'S FORGOTTEN GARDEN:
Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out: CD-R

A deranged B-52's? Red Hot Chili Peppers? Primus? At times, it almost sounds like the lead singer is rapping (badly) and the cover art looks like a screen capture of those silly Windows Media Player graphics. There are songs about weed, whores, and fat girls. And every time I put the CD into my computer it freezes. No matter how you slice it, this is just awful. —Chris Mason (Self-released)

BERLIN BRATS:
Believe It or Not (1973-1976): CD

The Berlin Brats, for those not in the know, were a notorious L.A. glam/proto-punk band fronted by Mr. Rick Wilder, who went on to greater infamy as the frontman for equally decadence-drenched punkers the Mau-Maus. Ever watch the "Battle of the Bands" segment of the Cheech and Chong flick *Up in Smoke*? If so, you've seen the Berlin Brats. Here, in all their Stones/Dolls-soaked glory are thirteen tracks culled from demo sessions, live tapes, and vinyl releases, plus a couple of bonus tracks that sound like session outtakes. Some of the tunes,

like "Tropically Hot," "Psychotic," and "House of Pleasure," joined Rick in the transition to the Mau-Maus, but I'd venture to say the bulk of material here has probably never been officially released anywhere else, or at least not so in three decades. When you're talking about tapes that are, best case scenario, at least thirty-four years old, you gotta expect a little rough sailing on occasion, but, for the most part, things here are quite clear, coherent, and worthy of loud stereo rockin'. More importantly, another linchpin in L.A.'s underground history gets some proper, though I gotta say this release is woefully skint on accompanying text/photos to give the average listener/purchaser some context and history on the band. Still, this clearly demonstrates that few did that sleazy rock sound better than these guys. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ratchet Blade)

BEYOND PINK: The New Black: LP

I've been wanting to get this album for a few months now. But like a lot of people, money has been tight. I have one of their previous releases somewhere but never got around giving it a listen. Super stoked when I saw it at HQ in my box for review, and even more enthused when it hit my turntable. This five-piece, all-female band from Sweden gives me the same excitement that I had when I first heard the Polish band Eye For An Eye. It's infectious hardcore with melodic undertones that is every bit as powerful or more so than other

bands in the same genre. The vocals are delivered with fierce compassion that slices through the music. I really like that the production is top notch here. You can hear each instrument with clarity and it gives the band the power to keep my attention. From start to finish, this record has no filler. Now this gives me incentive to organize my music room so I can find their previous release. —Donofthedeat (Emancypunx)

BIG EYES: Demo: 7"

Immortalized in vinyl, these songs were originally recorded for a demo (as the title suggests). What you get is four tracks of scuzz, slowed-down, female-fronted, power pop influenced punk rock from the people who have done time in such bands as Cheeky, Seasick [NJ], and ANS. With a pedigree like that, you already know they can shred, but do they have the pop sensibility to arrange Joan Jett-esque pop thrillers? Of course. These songs are pure leather and chains. Each copy should come with a fog machine. —Daryl (Evil Weevil, evilweevilrecords@gmail.com)

BIG SODA: Paper Route: 7"

It's kind of funny; in the '90s my favorite band was the Ramones. These days, I'm on a steady diet of Superchunk, who I largely ignored in their heyday. The only logical conclusion I can draw from this is that I'm always a couple decades behind. Big Soda seems to share my

problem. This Brooklyn-based punk band has a lot more in common with '90s college rock than the Sex Pistols, and that's a-okay with me! Another solid release from a consistently solid label. —Chris Mason (Evil Weevil, evilweevilrecords.com)

BILLY RAYGUN: Seasick: CDEP

Flailing, wild, adolescent punk. Rough around the edges in the best sort of way. The liner notes mention that this EP was written and recorded when the members were around fifteen years old. If these guys were your teenage brothers, you'd be the one offering to drive the battered van around just so they could get to shows. —Candice (Moonquake, no address listed)

BIRD STRIKE: Demo '10: CD-R

Sloppy, blown-out, sad-fun, bilingual (English/Spanish) punk rock. What it lacks in fidelity (I mean, it is a legit demo, as advertised), it more than makes up for energy and nice little instrumental flourishes inside its crashing wave. It does what a demo should—makes me like the band while making me excited to hear these songs with a wee less spit and a wee more polish. (My only complaint is that "We Could Complain," is mastered so loud compared to the rest of the CD, I almost blew out an eardrum and some speakers.) This is the exact type of band that should be playing a front room with a low-hanging plastic-molded-candles chandelier overhead. Classy, but 40oz classy, not

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BLACK TRAITOR: Self-titled: Cassette

You know that cassette that you found at the thrift store for a quarter? The one that made you think, "Aw, what the hell?" Then you put it in your car stereo and it was all fucked up. Well, imagine that instead of Prince or Tom Petty or a likely find such as those, it's a hardcore band that reminds you of Born Against. Next, imagine the fucked-up screeching distortion to be intentional tape manipulation, because that's precisely what they did. It was kind of interesting, but only a noiser would listen to it more than once. —Craven Rock (Leatherbar, myspace.com/leatherbarrecords)

BOBBY JO EBOLA AND THE CHILDREN MACNUGGITS: F: CD

A new release here from one of the Bay Area's more notorious groups active during the '90s. What you get for your green are smart, topical tunes that fall well within the confines of "alternative rock," but touch upon a number of stylistic genres—a little country here, a dash o' punk, a dabble of '50s rock—outside that pigeonhole and aren't afraid to punctuate their points with some humor, resulting in a more colorful and creative palette than one usually runs into. —Jimmy Alvarado (silversprocket.net)

BRAIN F: Restraining Order: 7"

Debut EP from a dual vocal, both male and female, clean guitar, garage-style punk band from Charlotte, NC. They immediately bring to mind the musical stylings of both the Shitty Limits and perhaps even the less spastic moments of Career Suicide. The optimist in me is truly into this record and appreciates it at face value. The pessimist thinks they can do much better. A new EP on the great Grave Mistake label is in the works as I write this, so it's possible I may soon get my wish. —Juan Espinosa (Static Shock)

BROADSIDERS, THE: Pressed to Kill: 10"

Whenever I get something for review that I'm unfamiliar with, I like to put it up against my old friend, the television, in a battle for my undivided attention. This challenge involves turning the television set on with the sound off, changing the channel to any foreign language programming (Korean game show, Armenian drama, what have you) and then dropping the needle on my record player with headphones intact. The victor is the one who distracts me more from the other. As soon as I started to take notice of the run-of-the-mill bar punk that was coming from my headset, I knew that this record would need to pull a miracle if it was going to stand a chance against the TV. Who won? Neither. I eventually found myself removing my headphones, cleaning my room, and ignoring both the stereo and the set. In fact, the only time I paid much attention to the record

was when I heard the lyrics, "You go to hell, I'll go to Texas." You know what? That sounds like a plan. —Juan Espinosa (Longshot, longshotmusic.com /Contra, contra-net.com)

BUYER'S REMORSE:

A Thorough Analysis: 7" EP

Some grade-A, thinkin' man's punk rock here. The tempos are firmly rooted in second gear, but they're sporting some impeccable musicianship and intelligent lyrics married to well structured songs that hint at influences that reach back into emo's earliest, best, and most creative era, yet pack enough punch to get heads bobbin'. Dunno how often they make it to a nearby stage, but I'd be willing to lay down some cash they can make even the most seasoned headliner work hard for their guarantee. Clear vinyl, creative packaging, and good fuggin' listening can be found here. —Jimmy Alvarado (vitriolrecords.com)

CANDY SNATCHERS, THE:

Down at Delilah's: CD

The Candy Snatchers are one of those bands that have consistently put out rock'n'roll records that make one flail recklessly about like some coked-up, snake dancing son of a bitch. No, that's not a bad thing; that's just the real spirit of rock'n'roll shaking your soul loose. Embrace. For this reason alone, I've loved the 'Snatchers for many, many moons. Dean Rispler, long-time friend and producer of the band, has captured the 'Snatchers lightening in a bottle,

yet again, with *Down at Delilah's*. It's a fucking supernatural whirlwind of a rekkid from front to back, but the songs that especially get me frothing at the mouth like an epileptic crackhead? "She's a Real Asshole," "Huffer," "9-1-1," "All the Way to Denver," "Doin' Time," and "The World Is Wrong." The disc is also available as a picture disc. This album was the last to be recorded with co-founding guitarist Matthew Odeitus, who passed away back in June of 2008. Matthew is sorely missed by those who knew him, but this and the many other recordings he made with the band will never fade away, let alone be matched. Viva, Candy Snatchers! —Designated Dale (drugfrontrecords.com)

CAPITALIST KIDS, THE:

Too Big to Fail: CD

Texas trio that plays power punk with true grit. With titles like "Let's Go Waterboarding" and "Gay Marriage is OK!" you would be right if you guessed Green Day mixed with The Queers. "Magic Alarm Clock" is my favorite tune on this record. I'm just glad there are no horns on this platter to turn it into a ska-punk turd, 'cause then I would have to compare them to Less Than Jake and that would be really, really bad. —Sean Koepenick (Grackle)

CARPENTER: Sea to Sky: CD

I loved All State Champion (ASC), a Vancouver, BC, post-punk, and dare I say emo, band. Unfortunately, they broke up a few years back so I was stoked to see that Carpenter features vocalist

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Daniel Sioui from ASC. Carpenter still carries a lot of the same sound as ASC, too, but that's to be expected since it's primarily Sioui's project. The songs are often romantically inclined, but much of the basis for the music and lyrics come across as being heavily influenced by Sioui's love for John Mellencamp's *American Fool*. Back then, he was known as John Cougar and the album provided us with hits such as "Jack and Diane" and "Hurts So Good." Being from Indiana (Mellencamp's life-long home), this album was right up my alley. Not only did it take my appreciation for Daniel Sioui's voice but it intertwined it with my love of John Mellencamp. Songs like "Just Another Friday Night"—with its catchy choruses, back-up vocals, and use of slide guitar sound like a true reinvention of 1980s Mellencamp. "Long Hard Day" seems like another song from the Coug's playbook, with its take on living the life of fun after a "long hard day" of doing something or other. I was too ensnared by the catchy hooks of the song to pay much attention to the detail of the lyrics. Of course, a song like "Joan" is a much more straight-up indie/emo tune with the mournful tale of trying to help out a friend. But that's not to say it isn't good, it's just one of the few tracks to differentiate from the straight-ahead rock'n'roll sound the band typically evinces over the course of the ten tracks that comprise *Sea to Sky*. With Sioui's great vocal range and the ridiculous catchiness of this album, this is surely its own version of a champion. —Kurt Morris (goldstockrecords.com)

CHOOSE YOUR POISON:

Laid to Waste: CD

What the fuck? A four-song CD? I know CDs are cheaper, so I'll skip the whole, "You should have put this out on vinyl," argument in favor of the, "You need to put more songs on this shiny piece of plastic," argument. Of course, such an argument would not even be necessary if this chaotic, screaming Wisconsin hardcore wasn't so good that it leaves me wanting much more after this measly ten-minute dose. —MP Johnson (myspace.com/chooseyourpoison)

CIVIL VICTIM: No False Hope: LP

Civil Victim are from Germany but sound influenced by American hardcore with some Scandinavian stuff to put some weight to their punch. I hear some Poison Idea in here, but it's not some by-the-numbers type shit. Their music is beefy hardcore punk that has catchy and tuneful elements side by side with a dark and gritty edge. Songs like "Sorry for Being Broke," "Personal Riot," and "Workmares" blaze by in a white-knuckled flash, then you get a song like "Room Full of Christians" that switches back and forth between mid tempo and full on thrash. The vocalist has a shredded throat style; at times he sounds like Dez Cadena. Check out the title track, where his voice has a little more space instead of being buried under a roaring guitar. "Where's the Healing?" is my favorite of the twelve songs on here. Starts off with a hellish bang then attacks religion (a target

always deserving of ire). The song has a little more noise going on and may be a little darker. Another primo record from Loud Punk. —M.Avr (Loud Punk, loudpunk.com)

CLAW TOE: Ingrown Ego: 7"

Interesting. Deep, deep bass on the title track with guitar playing that rings out—not chords, just notes that shimmer a la Keith Levene. Definitely influenced by Pere Ubu and *Metal Box*. Lo-fi as hell with ominous sing-speak vocals. Sounds like doom or a more realized version of Catholic Discipline. The guitar playing on both sides of this 45 is formidable. Definitely would be into hearing more, pending no further releases have a swastika on the cover. (I was always somewhat conflicted with the Electric Eels over this tactic. It didn't infuriate me so much as it seemed like a dumb misappropriation. Their music was grating and brilliant enough...) As for this 7", it's impressive. Glad someone has the nerve to put this type of music out on vinyl. —Ryan Leach (Criminal IQ, criminaliq.com)

CLOSET FAIRIES: "Popular Science" b/w "Painted in a Corner": 7"

So this is the last Closet Fairies release, eh? While they've always been a band I liked (especially their split with Party Garbage), they always kinda seemed like a band in transition. And while *Razorcake* has flubbed up their band name in the past, let's set the story straight here. Closet Fairies play flawless Toys That Kill/Marked Men worship.

Garagey, poppy, punk that's always well put together. Who can't get behind a line like "Don't let them paint you into a corner of another rich man's dream!"? —Daryl (Shock To The System)

COKE BUST: Lines in the Sand: CD

Playing hardcore punk is kinda like playing the blues, in that it's deceptively simple. Sure, anyone with a rudimentary grasp of how to play an instrument and the mechanics of the genre can string together enough chords and conventions to crank out a tune, but it's a helluva lot tougher than it looks to do it well, and it's a friggin' hat trick of another sort to put together enough consistently solid tunes to make a good 7" EP, let alone a full-length. Coke Bust turns in seventeen tracks of ADD-length bursts here, the bulk of which vacillates between warp factor nine thrash and full-bore grind, with little of the metal trappings that often accompany similar bands' music. While it does begin to become a bit of a blur after a while, especially with the inclusion here of a number of additional tracks from assorted comps and EPs, they manage to pull off said hat trick, and the infusion of what sounds like righteous anger and their willingness to push a little at the conventions of a number of genre's sub-pigeonholes keeps them ahead of the pack. If you're a fan of the granddaddies in this field—DRI, Deep Wound, Siege, et. al.—you're gonna find loads to get excited over. —Jimmy Alvarado (sixweeksrecords.com)

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COLA FREAKS: Self-titled: CD

Cola Freaks have yet to let me down, and I figured this would be good, but this goes way beyond any expectations I had. They've fleshed out their minimal punk sound with a keyboard, more low end, a darker side (maybe some goth influences?), and thrust in the songs. The opener, "Uppers & Downers," hits the listener right between the eyes from the first note, then they take you on through the remaining ten tracks varying the tempos, messing with textures, and they keep the energy at a constant boil. They slow things down a bit with "Kniven," "Slå Ihjel," "Eder Ord," but then they pick up the pace with total rippers like "Hva Dū På?" and "Skibet Synker." In the past, it would have been easy to make comparisons to older bands from the '70s and early '80s, and while Cola Freaks still have that sound, this album shows they're expanding and making a style that's all their own. Awesome album the whole way, and a high point in an already flawless catalog. —M.Avrø (Hjernesvind, hjernesvind.com)

COME AND TAKE IT: Forget It?: 7"

Swaying between somber and rage Come And Take It offer four tracks of unbiased frustration directed both inward and outward. While I can easily see them getting grouped in with other sad-sack pop punk bands, you get a good mix of blood-boiling aggression (Born Against cover anybody?) and down-to-earth humor

(a slice o' pizza is actually a pretty fucking great idea for a band logo). If you're into scrappy, brooding Pegboy-influenced DIY pop punk, check them out. —Daryl (Twistworthy)

CORPSE, THE:

Fight against the Rules: CD

From what I can tell, this is a CD reissue of a tape-only release by this pissed-off Polish hardcore band that existed from 1985-1989, though a lot of the information in the liner notes is in Polish (the lyrics and an interview conducted in 2007 are thankfully translated into English), so don't quote me on that. This isn't normally my thing, but this band is definitely as good as, if not better than, a lot of the western crossover bands that existed at the time. Plus it's always amazing to me that bands like this existed in the Soviet bloc. A really neat piece of history! —Chris Mason (Refuse, refuserecords.nfis.aplus.pl)

COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON:

Eater of Worlds: LP

I thought the *Turn into Shadows* tape they released earlier was pretty good. But this album surpasses all they've done prior. The songs have a darker and more ominous tone and a stronger dynamic structure. The title track is a great example of this. The drums roll through with an avalanche in slow motion style, while the guitar rings out like a siren, and then there are some really cool accents from the bass. The cold and bleak feel of their

music really comes through here. Plus, the recording is much more solid. Everything has more "oomph" to it. The opener, "Hymnal 238," is fuckin' epic! "The Scourge" is an absolute ripper! Fast and tight execution. I like how clean the drummer pulls off the rolls and makes use of the kit. Then they transition from that song into "Turn into Shadows," and it's pure godhead! They also re-record the excellent "Like Animals" (which also appeared on the *Turn into Shadows* tape). The closer, "Construereamos De Nuevo," is perfect and wraps up the record with an even more ominous feel. Seriously, some of the best d-beat crust I've heard in a long time. —M.Avrø (Aborted Society, abortedsociety.com)

DAG NASTY: *Day with Shawn: LP*

These nine songs were recorded before Dag Nasty's 1986 record *Can I Say?* with the band's original singer Shawn Brown at the helm. After the band went through a lineup change, these tracks were shelved and have appeared only as a bootleg. Although all nine songs appear on *Can I Say?*, these versions are rougher with more defined back ups. Brown's vocals bring gruffness to the band's signature melodic sound that is unprecedented in their discography. I'm a fan of the band's first two albums, but I don't go too far with melodic hardcore, and I wasn't sure this was going to be essential, but I'm glad I took the plunge. —Billups Allen (Dischord)

DARK RIDES: Self-titled: 7"EP

2011 is a much different DIY punk trip than 2001. The 00s have shifted over to the left. What was once a 10,000 print run is now 1,000. So it takes a certain level of grit to just keep your head above water. It takes a larger amount of buoyancy to make songs that are about soul, about the power of human will, of fighting back not with weaponry but thoughts and actions. The short crib is that Dark Rides is superlative "Chattanooga-y" (the "y" because I'm not sure they all live in Chattanooga) melodic punk. It's sweet, rough, catchy, homegrown, modest, and forthright: People and music beautiful from scars. Beautiful glints in the eyes when brushing themselves off from being knocked down again. Sparking and staring right through opponents. Dark Rides bark militant compassion and sing about not giving up as the only viable option. For those who're drawing out the band family trees on napkins, Dark Rides includes Eric and Buddha of Hidden Spots, Ashley of Future Virgins and Sexy, Amy of Savage Weekend, and Morgan of Tulsa and Black Rainbow. This record's awesome and totally worth seeking out. —Todd (Do Ya Hear We?)

DEAD UNCLES: "Flatlining" b/w "Best to Forget" and "Little Tragedies": 7" EP

I don't feel like making friends today, so I'll say that pop punk people who are completely locked in pop punk boxes are sad, vicious creatures who—by copious evidence—have developed a special

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venom on the interwebs. So when pop punk comes across my desk, I have to take a deep breath and whisper, "Don't let the chodes dictate." The Dead Uncles are very good. I like them. Ironically—as with Be My Doppelganger—they didn't instantly convince me. It's ironic, because the underpinning of pop punk is the goal of being instantly catchy pop instead of "re-listen and soak in it" music. But, there's no mistaking that Dead Uncles grew on me with each spin—there are multiple musical levels at work and the lyrics belie a certain level of candidness—reminding me of Dear Landlord and The Dopamines. I like those bands and I'm willing to full-face admit it to some digitally-infuriated doucheburger who can't see beyond their small, precious, ultimately suffocating fascinations with a rigid subgenre. —Todd (Shock To The System)

DEREK LYN PLASTIC:
I Can't Pass a Drug Test: 7" EP

Another release from this prolific one-man new wave/sleaze band. For some reason, I like this band less and less over time. I think there was a point where his songs sounded more punk rock and less sleaze-core. Now, I don't know. Maybe it's just that I've heard too much of it and it's not all super awesome. Really, all of his songs are starting to sound the same. I think, if anything, it's an argument against releasing every song you've ever written (or close to it, perhaps). —Maddy (Certified PR, certifiedprecords.com)

DEREK LYN PLASTIC: *Life and Death: 7"*
Top-notch 45. Loud and noisy—a lot like the Demon's Claws and some of Jay Reatard's solo stuff. Certified PR has been putting out some quality vinyl. This is no exception. —Ryan Leach (Certified PR, certifiedprecords.com)

DIRTY MARQUEE: *Self-titled: 7" EP*
Warmth. Melodic, moldering glows. Nothing too fast. Nothing too loud. Constrained, but jumpy and really catchy. That's tough stuff to pull off because it runs along the ridge of slipping down the steep cliffs of boredom, corniness, or cliché. Pulling the string from Superchunk's long legacy, echoing the ache and drive of The Carrie Nations' *Be Still*, and reminiscent of the sweat-cooling, mellower parts of Sexy, this is another example of DIY punk not necessarily sounding "punk" to the outside listener. And that's totally an advantage here because Dirty Marquee can both run under the radar and totally soar without a lot of tight-ass, honky pigeonhole constraints. Excellent all around. —Todd (Squirmy)

DISPLEASE: *Think!: CD*
Discharge font, Peni cover, a song called "Nuclear War." Should I even elaborate? Slicker-than-typical d-beat "warfunk" that quite intentionally sticks right to the painfully overdone rules. —Dave Williams (Old Hat, oldhatrecords.blogspot.com / Trismus, mspace.com/trismusrecords / Miravoice, mspace.com/miravoice)

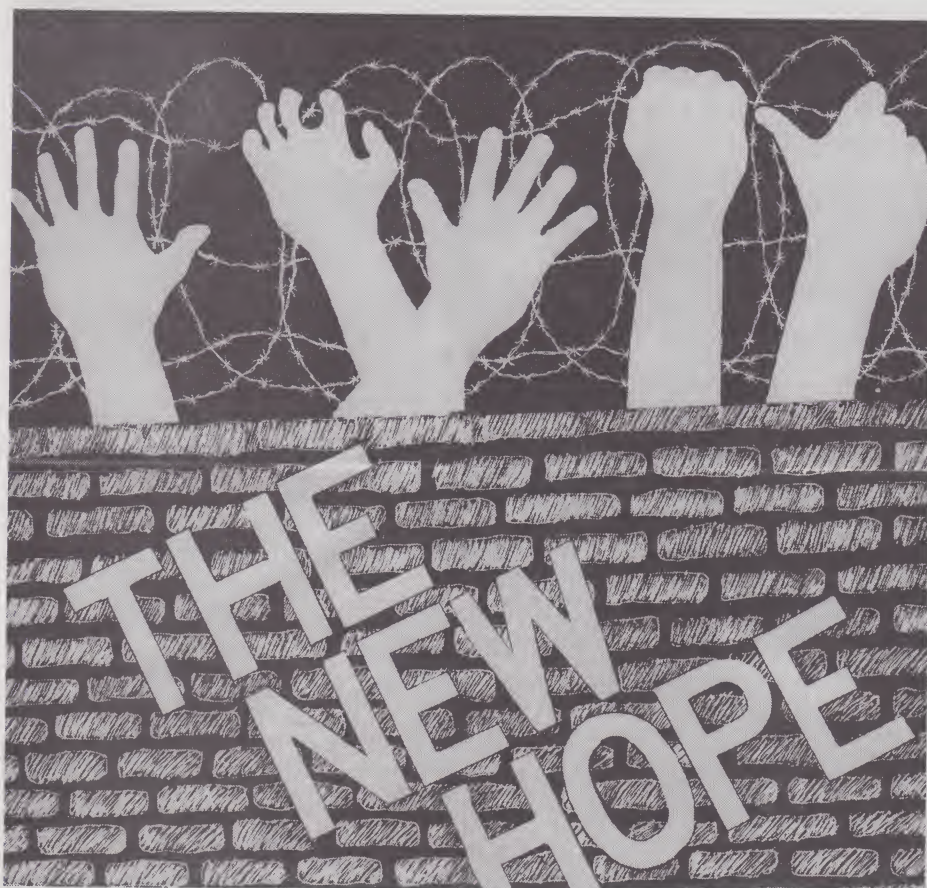
DOWNERS OF THE WORLD UNITE:
Digital Teens /
Nothing Looks Good: CD-R

As near as I can tell, this is a CD-R version of a digital-only release. (I guess they *really* had to have that Razorcake review!) As a crotchety, misanthropic old guy, I immediately shudder whenever I receive a one-sheet from a record label. It will assuredly be filled with name-dropping, shoddy comparisons, and poor grammar/misspellings. I'll give it to DOTWU; there are no misspellings or grammatical fuck-ups in their one-sheet. This fact alone nets them a few points from me. There is, however, a rather lengthy list of bands they have shared stages with, along with a "similar artists" list. (Are reviewers really that lazy/musically uneducated that they have to be told who an artist sounds like? Couldn't they just, you know, *listen* to the damn thing?) Of the fourteen artists listed, I enjoy only one. (This enjoyment also happened roughly sixteen years ago. I still have the records, but it ain't like I'm pulling them out with much frequency.) That should tell you what I think of Downers Of The World Unite. —Ryan Horky (Thinker Thought, thinkerthought.com)

EXCRUCIATING TERROR:
Expression of Pain: LP
There's a reason why these guys are held in such high regard in the realm of grindcore. They're definitely the best grind band to come out of Los Angeles. This album was originally a CD-only

release that came out around 1996, and it holds up well today. In fact, it doesn't sound dated at all. If anything, it makes most other grind bands out there at the moment sound amateurish. The songs are in the fast range, but they throw in time changes to break up the onslaught and to keep everything from turning into one long blur. The opener, "Self Destruct," is mid tempo with a dark and doomish tone that illustrates the sonic power these guys had. "A Technicality," which closes the record, has a mainly mid-tempo pace where the guitars sound sinister and dark. The drums are more out front and there are some breaks here and there where they put in some rolls that effectively give everything more of a punch. In between these songs they let loose one rager after another. The songs are blazing with abrasive guitars and even more abrasive vocals that are like 80 grit sandpaper in your ears. It's all backed up with drums that sound like they're fed through a wood chipper and an ominous low end. Heavy and fast as hell, all in one. Not an easy feat by any stretch. Nice packaging with this as well—foldout poster, and a printed inner sleeve. Will there be a reissue of *Expression of Hate*? —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

FIRESTARTER: *"Saturday Night (Is the End of the World)" b/w "Rock'n'roll People": 7"*
Figuring the turnover rate in punk, pardon me if you know this tune: Firestarter's some of the guys—Fifi



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and Sammy, I do believe—from Teengenerate. Teengenerate were a Japanese garage band who handed America its ass in the '90s. Firestarter are Teengenerate's power pop / smoother (dare I say Bay City Rollers at times?), well-groomed doppelganger. For whatever awesome reason, they sing in English and for the untuned ear, it takes a bit to realize they're not singing in Japanese. It adds to the charm. So, since this is 2011 and if you're down with Gentleman Jesse, Rough Kids, and Marvelous Darlings, it's probably a good idea to do some back-exploring to Firestarter. This 7" is great. I wonder if 2003's *Live on the Heat* LP will ever get released Stateside, vinyl-like. —Todd (Shit Sandwich / The Modernist)

FLESH LIGHTS: *You're a Stealer: 7"*

Good, solid rock'n'roll that is deceptive in its simplicity, and I concur with the included description of the Flesh Lights as "muscle pop." I first thought the record was two simple rock'n'roll ditties, but further spins reveal levels of complexities and inventiveness not often heard among these sorts of bands. The tunes rock and the wailing vocals work wonderfully as the singer draws out notes that smooth over the staccato rhythm, like a fine layer of silt over jagged bedrock. Kind of like the Rip-Offs, only talented. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Twistworthy)

FOREIGN OBJECTS:

"A Kind of Life" b/w "The Key": 7"

Two straight-up killer punk tunes featuring a strong, powerful female

vocalist ala the Alley Cats. "A Kind of Life" is the faster of the two: quirky change ups, riding bass, and shouted backing vocals. "The Key" is a mid-tempo head nodder that leaves you needing more. Good thing there's an LP on the way. —Daryl (Dirt Cult)

GASOLINE GRENADE /

THEMINDLESSHOW: *Split: Cassette*

This split cassette release between two Malaysian bands is a reminder of just how global punk is. Both bands play relatively mainline hardcore, but with a freshness/vitality that you rarely get out of U.S. suburban counterparts. The recordings are raw and listening to it on cassette feels like checking out a breakthrough demo tape back in the day. The lyrics are primarily in English, except for one of the songs, "Dilarang Melarang," which is in Malay. Both bands play fast hardcore, with vocals ranging from screamed to melodic. There are some kids having a blast with these guys somewhere in Malaysia. And that's a comforting thought. —Art Ettinger (Pure Minds, puremindsrecords.blogspot.com / Pissart, pissartrecords.com)

GENTLEMAN JESSE AND HIS MEN:

"You Got the Wrong Man"

b/w *"Stubborn Ghost": 7"*

I'm always taken a bit by surprise when I re-remember that Paul Weller was barely scraping twenty by the time The Jam released *All Mod Cons*. And since I was five or six when those Jam records started coming out and

was too busy falling out of trees, I got the discography order all jumbled up. Being thirteen or fourteen at the time when I started listening closely to The Jam, I wanted shit as fast and jumpy as possible and *All Mod Cons* got played last, behind *In the City* and *This Is the Modern World*. Count it as the perspective of age, or being here when the timeline's in real time, but I really dig it when Gentleman Jesse And His Men play a couple of slow burners, like on this 7". I'm in no way saying that these gentlemen musicians are "onionskin on a lightbox"—ing Bruce Foxtan and Co., it's just that I find myself appreciating their sense of fire and harmony, the bubbling and support of the bass, the vignette-like style of the lyrics, and forlorn-but-fuck-'em attitude. Thumbs up. —Todd (Hozac)

GESTAPO KHAZI: *"Escalators" b/w*

"The Atomic Kind": 7"

With bands as obviously well realized as Long Beach's Gestapo Khazi, I have to resist going into my record collector geek/reviewer cubby hole and rubbing obscure references all over myself like Scrooge McDuck in a money vault. But I think a brief trip down Southern California's back alleyways that feed into the Big Punk Boulevard won't harm anything. Gestapo Khazi's accomplishment stems from a secure understanding of several tributaries of past, but being able to channel them into a sinister, anxious, cold vibe. I hear both death rock (Super Heroines and 45 Grave) and rockabilly (Blasters); I

undeniably hear the warbling, haunted wraith of not only the Gun Club's Jeffery Lee Pierce, but also of Rob Ritter and Terry Graham (so, by way punk's family shrub, I hear a bit of The Bags—where those two guys came from, too). Gestapo Khazi is all those things, and more, played like none of that other stuff had to exist to come to this particular musical conclusion. And that makes it pretty damn great on its own two feet, even if you've never listened to any other band mentioned in this review. —Todd (Eradicator)

GET RAD: *What the Fuck Happened to Common Sense?: 12" EP*

What's in a band's name? Sometimes nothing. Other times it can be very misleading. Just like the Killers don't really kill and the White Stripes make me see red. At first glance, Get Rad looks like the name of a band full of dudes with flipped up bills on their baseball caps and sleeveless JFA T-shirts (eek!) And while they certainly have more in common with skate punk than sucky music, it also goes to show that a moderately bad band name can go a long way when the tunes are up to par. In fact, the more I listen to this, the more I start to realize that not too many bands can pull off awesomeness in the tricky world of melodic hardcore. Kid Dynamite were always a wee bit too melodic for my tastes and Propagandhi progressively got too preachy to stomach. Get Rad fucking nailed it. —Juan Espinosa (Underground Communiqué, mspace.com/undergroundcommuniqrecords)

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GHOST: *Opus Eponymous*: LP

While I feel like every few months or so there's a punk or hardcore record that really blows me away, it's a much less common occurrence that a metal record hits me in a way that my favorites do. Luckily, the last couple of years have offered up some truly great metal records (Christian Mistress, Deathspell Omega, the Nachzehrer demo, the new Crowbar), and now my absolute favorite metal record of the last many years is seeing a North American vinyl release: Ghost's *Opus Eponymous*. This is not your average Satanic metal record. While the lyrics certainly maintain an entirely antichristian focus (in an old-school devil-worshipping sacrificial altar kinda way), musically, Ghost have more in common with Blue Oyster Cult and Boston than they do with their satanic contemporaries (with a hearty helping of Mercyful Fate, of course). That's not to say that *Opus Eponymous* isn't jammed full of heavy riffing and distinctly metal grooves, but it's their melodic, almost radio-ready delivery that sets Ghost way apart from the metal pack. Anyone I've played this for, from die-hard metal folks to pop punks, has been totally stoked on it. It's a perfect execution of novel approach, great talent, and theatre—and its replayability is unbelievable. I'll be through my third or fourth repetition before I think maybe it's time to switch it up... which I might... maybe. The only flaw I can find is the record's brevity, but that's easily

remedied with the repeat function. Just... fuck. Wow. —Dave Williams (Rise Above)

GIRLS, THE:

"Remote View" b/w "Lord Auch": 7"

Two more tracks of damaged new wave for all you fuck ups to get fucked up to. In the past, I've put this band's Dirtnap full-length on simply to annoy people, and sometimes the people I'm trying to annoy end up being pretty stoked on it. It's a catchy chaos. The Pacific Northwest does an amazing job of crippling people's psyche, often resulting in wonderfully deranged music. Here is one more example. —Daryl (Hozac)

HEAVY TIMES:

"No Plans" b/w "Ice Age": 7"

Be it Todd Taylor or Daryl Gussin, someone over at *Razorcake* has been looking out for me. Contrary to what some of my former lackluster editors thought at different rags, I really don't like trashing records. It's just that most of them are subpar. The quality of the 45s being sent my way in the past few months is something I'm not accustomed to. Last month it was Talbot Adams' 7" on Douchemaster. This go around, it's Heavy Times' "No Plans/Ice Age" 7". I'd never heard of Heavy Times before receiving this single. Nevertheless, the label on the record read Hozac (Jacuzzi Boys, Box Elders, Christmas Island, etc.), so expectations were high. The A-side is absolutely amazing. Musically, it's reminiscent of

the minimalism found in Dan Treacy's work with the Television Personalities. Incredibly driving and super simple—just change chords when necessary to break the monotony. If anything, Heavy Times adds further credence to Alex Chilton's solo work just after Big Star. A number of journalists (Stephen Thomas Erlewine and David Cleary) panned Chilton's *Like Flies on Sherbet*. I thought it was a brilliant record. The music was so shambolic; it felt like a natural conclusion to the tailspin Chilton had gone through in the late '70s. It was also the first time Chilton's music matched the teenage subject matter of his lyrics in Big Star; the record sounds like a bunch of middle school session musicians played on it. That's what Heavy Times does on "No Plans." The verse just repeats: "We can't go over there/While I don't care/Because all we have is time." Which is a really sweet and endearing lyric, because when you're twelve, you can't go over to some places due to age restrictions or a very real or imagined fear that you'd get your ass kicked. Additionally, this track reminds me of Chilton's early solo work because kids used to have free time. It wasn't totally commodified by Playstation and Facebook back in the late '70s. You had to actually find something to do. And when you're young, truly all you have is time and hopefully a BMX bike and maybe a few quarters for soda. On all levels, "No Plans" meshes perfectly. The B-side ("Ice Age") is fucking great too. Very Ramones—driving, and I'm

sure great live...I think there's a one-note guitar solo in there! But there's a reason "No Plans" is on the A-side. Is this 7" worth picking up? Fuck, man, that's a no-brainer: this 7" is an absolute burner. —Ryan Leach (Hozac, hozacrerecords.com)

HUMPERS, THE:

War Is Hell/My Machine: CD

I occasionally troll the internet for records I can't afford; guess I like to torture myself. I found this disc on eBay for like twelve dollars, thinking maybe it was a cheap bootleg. Last time I checked, The Humpers first album, *My Machine*, went for upwards of \$150 and there's no way I'd pay that much for any record. And what is this *War Is Hell*? I'd heard this was the long-lost second Humpers album, so I had to go for it. As a quick aside, I long had doubts that *My Machine* even existed, as information about The Humpers was non-existent until maybe 2007. I stumbled across their MySpace page as the band was preparing for some reunion shows in 2007 and interviewed vocalist Scott Drake, who confirmed the existence of *My Machine*. At a 2009 show for his current band (Scott Drake And The World's Strongest Men), Drake asked me if I'd ever heard of this alleged second album and that he was hoping to someday release the first two on one disc. Apparently, this here is a legitimate release from Europe's Devils Jukebox Records (I know, it makes me uncomfortable too that they

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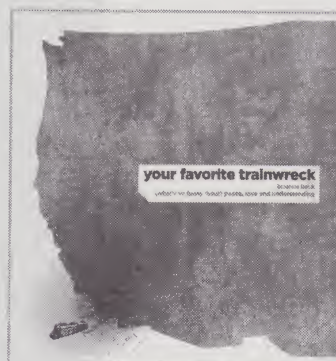
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don't put an apostrophe before the "s" in "Devils"). Liner notes, written by Drake himself, detail the circumstances of both albums (recorded for Yugoslavian label Listen Loudest, but *War Is Hell* was shelved due to the Yugoslavian Civil War). Many of the songs from *War Is Hell* would go on to appear on The Humpers next album, *Positively Sick on 4th St*, re-recorded, of course. Apparently, both albums were recorded live to DAT and to today's ears they have obvious limitations, but don't disregard this disc! Remember that technological innovations have greatly improved chances of bands with no recording budgets to record a decent sounding album. For those who don't know The Humpers, this is rock'n'roll (yes, like The Kids song says) from one of the greatest (and my second all-time favorite) bands. Imagine if Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers took uppers instead of downers. —Sal Lucci (Devils Jukebox, lamf.biz)

IDLE TIMES: Self-titled: CD

Excellent noisy pop with psychedelics swirling in the mix. One of the most solid albums from start to finish you're likely to hear this year. Not one bad song in the bunch. "Do You Hear Those Bells?" and "Hey Little Girl" are superb and a worthy excuse to buy this record above anything else. There are elements that remind me of SST-era Sonic Youth, where the songs have a slight drone, collapse and build again, and go off in a somewhat different direction. Basically, these guys are

everything you wish the Sic Alps were. Sometimes they're straight forward. Other times, they go off into a noisy jam that is so f'n good it makes you glad to be where ever it is when you listen to this. Excellent, excellent, excellent! —M.Avrq (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

INJECTIONS, THE:

"Prison Walls" b/w "Lies": 7"

Dunno how they're managing to pull it off exactly, but Last Laugh is on a tear, releasing über-rare punk 45s from the days of yore, and this one is no exception. Originally released in 1980, this gem by San Diego punkers The Injections has apparently fetched a pretty penny on the collector circuit. "Prison Walls" fancies itself a primitive anthem of empowerment and nearly succeeds as such. The flip is a quieter, moodier piece punctuated with occasionally louder outbursts. If you're interested in this solely for the music, you'll be pleased as punch with a copy of this. If you're one of them collector snobs, you'd be a total ninny to pay oodles of dough for an original pressing when copies of this are so readily available. —Jimmy Alvarado (Last Laugh)

J.C. SATAN: Sick of Love: CD

This is what I get for expecting some kind of Thrill Kill Kult knock off. But can you really blame me? The cover is hand drawn: a masked guy, two topless babes, one with the number of the beast carved into her torso, another with a baphomet necklace hanging between her tits... Instead of overtly campy,

exploitation tracks, J.C. Satan churns out an orgy of garage, psychedelia, and rockabilly. Using male and female vocals, this French and Italian quintet conjures up hippy Beatles tunes, The 13 Floor Elevators, My Bloody Valentine, shoegaze, and The Velvet Underground's easy chord progression and dreamy, narcotic vocals. My faves are "Prehistoric Love," "Escape for Love," and "Superhero." Also included is the four-song *Satan EP*. Like Gogol Bordello, Satan has managed to build bridges between genres where others have failed. If you dig the aforementioned bands, pick this up. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Slovenly, slovenly.com, label@slovenly.com)

JUKEBOX ZEROS:

City of Bother and Loathe: 7"

Another phenomenal release from Philly's kings of punk rock'n'roll! This band never fails to blow me away with their great songs and top notch songwriting. Coming on a whole lot like the Humpers, the Jukebox Zeros just nail mid-tempo glampunk. The title of this one is a great play on the nickname for their hometown and includes a cover of "Let's Get Zooed Out" by The Testors. —Mike Frame (Rank Outsider, rankoutsiderrecords.com)

KNIFEY SPOONY:

Animal Pleasures Demo: Cassette

With a name like KnifeY SpoonY and coming from the Bay Area, you expect some fannypacker pop punk here. This is definitely in the same loose,

not-too-serious spirit of a Thrillhouse Records band and I would bet that they wear fanny packs. However, instead of pop punk, it's raucous and freaked-out garagey punk. The first bands that come to mind when I hear this are The Teeners, Knife Party, and *Circa Now!*-era Rocket From The Crypt. It reminds me of shitty Richard Hell bootlegs, too. The spazzed-out vocals kick my ass right out the porta-potty where they recorded this demo. Then I'm left with no choice but to start shaking my butt before I can clean the shit off myself. I hope they stick around long enough to cut a record. You get some blistering covers of Creedence and a well-loved band from Minnesota, too! —Craven Rock (Self-released, knifeyspoonyband@gmail.com)

LIL DAGGERS: King Corpse: 7"

This is music to dance to in smoky basements that have shag carpeting on the walls. Lo-fi garage rock that is completely disinterested in who you are or what you have to say, and it's not going to give you anything unless you get up off the couch and move, at least a little bit. Then if you're not happy with the organs suffocating you or the drums pushing you to dance faster, you can just leave. The party will be better without you. —MP Johnson (Livid)

LIQUOR STORE: "Free Pizza" b/w

"Trash Sandwich (Parts 2 & 3)": 7"

The A-side is some sloppy, lo-fi 1-4-5 inspired garage rock'n'roll that I would say is all about pizza, if I could actually

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understand what they were singing about (I can't). Meanwhile, the B-side isn't quite thrash, but it's still great. It won me over, even if this "free pizza" coupon is fake. —Joe Evans III (Almost Ready, almostreadyrecords.com)

LOST TRIBE: *The Dawn: Cassette*

Authentic and atmospheric and shot through with a kind of ground-level doom. Sounds like a pitch-perfect melding of Joy Division, the Instigators, and the Mob, if that makes any sense. People from Aghast and Helldistort playing frickin' goth, and it works incredibly well. I've played this cassette at least once a day since I received it. Wonderfully dark and simple tunes braced by occasional flurries of synth, a singer who belts it out with the reverb on ten, and an overall feel of a terrifically danceable apocalypse right around the corner. If you can find this, *get it*. —Keith Rosson (Lost Tribe)

LOVER: *Home Alone: 7"*

Lover always delivers with the fun, no-frills, pop rock that makes you smile and bob your head and play it again. Great guitar sound from Rich Crook from the Reatards and Lost Sounds, sounding nothing like them—but you know you can depend on him to deliver cool music. These are hooks you need. —Speedway Randy (Windian, windianrecords.blogspot.com)

M.O.T.O.:

Kissing All the Wrong Asses: 7" EP

M.O.T.O.'s Paul Caporino has put in several lifetimes as a musician. By

default, punk's claimed him (which he seems ambivalent to, at best). Any way it's sliced as music (not commerce), it's a victory for both artist and audience. Huge, catchy guitar riffs—think Kinks, Thin Lizzy, Cheap Trick, T Rex—but not as cock-and-balls wagging. More outsider. More weirdo. Not ironically. Not as a come-on. But as someone who's unsure of how to act in society aside from making amazingly catchy songs that could become national anthems of disenfranchisement. I like how M.O.T.O. songs vibrate, like you're hearing two things simultaneously, so it's always a bit off and totally on. This EP's as good as any in Paul's extensive catalog. —Todd (Windian)

MAD CADDIES:

Consensual Selections: CD

Nearly fifteen years after their debut and innumerable world tours later, these rude boys are *not* labeling this a greatest hits comp. Instead, these twenty-four tracks were chosen as some of the Caddies'—and their fans'—favorite songs. A new roots reggae tune from their forthcoming album *Keep It Going* is also thrown in, plus tons of color photos and commentary from a bandmate on each song. Spanning early tracks like "Preppie Girl" and "The Bell Tower" to "Drinking for 11" and "Tired Bones," some veteran fans may be disappointed that faves like "Macho Nachos" weren't featured. Nevertheless, whether you're a hardcore never-missed-a-show fan or just looking to add to your

punk/ska collection, this skaroovy comp shouldn't be overlooked. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Fat, fatwreck.com)

MALIGNANT TUMOUR / LYCANTHROPY: *Split: EP*

A crusher of a split here. Malignant Tumour play crustcore with a Motörhead influence. Instead of being fast, they go for a more mid-tempo approach. This gives their sound more weight and darkness. Lots of low end, gravelly vocals, and a thick guitar sound. Three songs and they're all good. Lycanthropy plays blindingly fast grindcore with multi-vocals. This is more raw than the material on their album. Five songs in a matter of minutes. There's fast, and then there's *fast*. These guys are *fast*! They throw a couple of stops in here and there, but the majority of it is like being on a rollercoaster ride that is one large speedy drop after another, then whipping turns that could fling you out if you're not hanging on. —M.Avg (Insane Society, insanesociety.com)

MEAN JEANS: *"Tears in My Beers" b/w "Cool 2 Drive": 7"*

The essence of comedy is taking the darkest shit in humans' psyche and making us laugh in spite of ourselves. It attempts to be a small slash of light in a fucked-up world with no shortage of truly horrible stuff happening every nanosecond. So when the Mean Jeans pull on the Ramones denim and stuff a couple sausages of songs down the

front, we all know they're not really encouraging everyone to drive drunk. Right? I mean, if you're taking the Mean Jeans at their literal word, you're going to run into some serious life management issues sooner or later that'll involve jail time, someone getting injured, liver cirrhosis, or, at the very least, high cholesterol. Fuckin' love the Mean Jeans. They take some of the sting out of George Carlin and most of the Ramones being dead. —Todd (Trouble In Mind, troubleinmindrecs@gmail.com)

MENTHOLS, THE: *Michigan Works: LP*

I tried and tried, but I couldn't think of a negative thing to say about this record. About thirty-three minutes of heady garage spread across nine tracks on twelve inches of vinyl. It has adrenaline without testosterone and jams without tie-dye. It's some rad-as-fuck rock'n'roll. This shit kills it. Every note on here is quality, all with a hypnotic allure, all lacking any hint of pretension. Whether you are out on the town, on a drive, or just sitting around, this record will undoubtedly make you think you are much cooler than you are. Five hundred of these exist; you should get one. —Vincent (UFO Dictator)

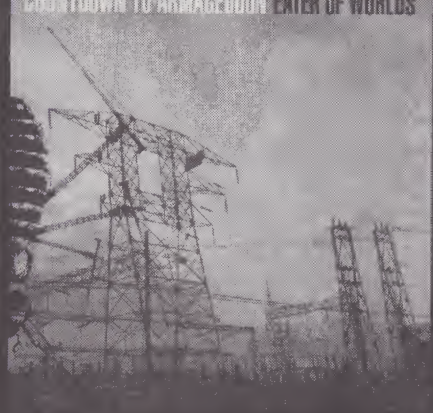
MERCHANDISE:

(Strange Songs) In the Dark: 12"

If life has taught me anything at this point, it is that it's not always a great idea to stick to just one regiment or ideal. Ten years ago, I'm pretty sure that I would steer clear of anything that wasn't punk, thrash, or grindcore. But,

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ER-17 MOSCOW MOSCOW MOSCOW - Fans of Stalin Show Yer Bottom 7"

As the only Russian-themed surf band to play on Tetris cubes, Moscow Moscow are treading some new waters in surf punk. They've managed to fit four of their explosive tunes onto their first seven-inch release (two instrumentals, and two with vocals). You'll hardly believe MMM is merely a two-piece: Red Sonja and Dennis the Red Menace. Fighting back the flying saucer attack with high-voltage songs. Tcheaper than Tchaikovsky!

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ER-14 GESTAPO KHAZI - Escalators b/w Atomic Kind 7"

Slithering out of Long Beach, CA comes the most-definitive band currently reshaping the world of hardcore, punk, surf, rockabilly and country. These modern people movers are influenced as much by Dangerhouse bands as by The Gun Club and The Flesh Eaters. Lighting the musical landscape on fire while utilizing the mythology of the Southwest: hot lust, old-time shootouts, and bleached skulls. If these two songs don't move you, you're probably dead.

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of course, time changes people and eventually my palate was cleansed enough for me to give other sounds a fair chance. Merchandise is definitely not what I would expect from a member of Cult Ritual—a band that very quickly became influential and sought after in the hardcore punk scene. With Merchandise, you're treated to the influence of acquired tastes such as '80s shoegaze and noise pop a la Jesus And Mary Chain or My Bloody Valentine. If you're a die-hard "give it to me short, fast, and loud" type, then this record isn't for you. Those of you with a broader scope for great music might end up as pleasantly surprised as I was. —Juan Espinosa (Katorga Works / Drugged Conscious)

MIESHA AND THE SPANKS: *Bedroom Back: 7"*

Great indie pop single from this fantastic Calgary, Alberta band, featuring the rhythm from the overlooked and genius Neckers. The sound is like a really poppy Heartless Bastards or that great Twinkle Van Winkle stuff from a few years back. High praise on both counts and a good band here; can't wait to hear more. —Mike Frame (Self-released, myspace.com/mandthespanks)

MORROW LIBERATES: *This Is a Democracy Not a Fucking War: CD*

I know I've prattled on about this before, but back when I was a kid, probably long before I'm guessing the oldest member of Morrow Liberates

was born, I was neck deep in the East L.A. punk scene. The Vex had closed down, the first group of local punk bands were off doing the dance with the major labels and breaking up, and we, the next group of piss-poor and funny-haired malcontents overdosing on Ramones and Black Flag records, found ourselves pretty much without a pot to piss in—no clubs to play, no one interested whatsoever in what we were doing outside of our immediate area, and no money to rent halls, release records, or even buy decent equipment. Left with exceedingly limited choices, we eventually coalesced into an ad hoc scene of bands—Butt Acne, Plain Agony, Copulation L.A., The Thrusters, No Church On Sunday, Insurrected State, Misled, Anti-Social, Resistant Militia, Conscientious Objector, and the list goes on and on—based almost solely in the neighborhood backyards. Most of us were shitfaced most of the time, few of us could play with anything better than rudimentary competence, and even fewer of us were savvy enough to know the difference between Emma Goldman and Goldman-Sachs, but underneath the drunken caterwauling was the sincerity of kids reacting to crushing poverty, the bleakness of their surroundings, and the triple dead end choices of "courthouse, jails, and factories" that seemed inevitable. Every weekend we drank, fought, and had a helluva blast reveling in being cultural pariahs. Inglewood's Morrow Liberates is affiliated with a cluster

of bands that fly the banner of "L.A. [Drunk] Punk," a non-professional-punk scene that likewise often utilizes backyard spaces, but is smart enough not to isolate itself geographically, playing anywhere they can across the county and beyond. It would be presumptuous, and pretentious, of me to infer that they're directly descended from what we were doing, but listening to 'em, I do hear the same anger at living in conditions that apparently haven't changed in the more than two decades between our respective scenes—discrimination, asshole cops, blight, poverty, and being ignored by a political machine that cares nothing for people that can't make campaign contributions. While their tunes more or less adhere to a too-well-worn "punk" template, and their adoption of the Cockney "oi" rallying cry makes me smile and shake my head in much the same way it does when American skinhead bands do the same, buried in what they're doing is a sincerity that most punk bands can only dream of. Unlike your average parrot punk band, they aren't afraid to take a position and do so with a lyrical intelligence and sophistication that, while no less direct, transcends their musical limitations. The average listener would probably pop this in and summarily dismiss it as the ravings of a bunch of kids born way too fucking late to know what "real" punk is, but those for whom it's intended will get it and love it. Sitting here in front of a computer less than a mile from

where I grew up and twenty-five years removed from wild weekends and Top Ramen for dinner, somehow I still get it, and I can tell you from experience: they may not sport the artistic nuance of others, but punk rarely gets this fucking real. —Jimmy Alvarado (unrepentantrecords.com)


NATURAL LAW: *Slump: 7"*

Can a band be classified as "mysterious guy hardcore" if a copy of the record gets sent in for review? Sonically, it harnesses all the aspects, and quite well I might add. Weird and dirty hardcore for the soul. Fans of the "genre" are highly advised to track this one down. —Daryl (Katorga Works/Hesitation Wound)


NEGATIVE STANDARDS:

I, II, III, IV, V: *Cassette*

Vaguely crusty-sounding hardcore from California that reminds me of various Tragedy/Deaththreat/His Hero Is Gone family of bands and should appeal to fans of any of those mentioned. The songs are solid, decently recorded, and lack the overly "epic" sound that makes bands like this fail. The samples are well placed and don't come across as cheesy. Honestly, though, the highlight of this tape for me was the essay written by the singer about his brother's decision to join the military and his own struggles and self-awareness with rethinking his political ideology (though not necessarily going back on it). It lends a lot of credibility to a band in a genre that sort of prides itself in being



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reactionary and full of rhetoric. It stuck out to me—not necessarily because I agree with his politics or those outlined by his brothers situation—but because it was refreshing to see a punk record that allowed the person on the receiving end to understand the shortcomings of the performer in a very human way, which is essentially the purpose of art and something overlooked by a lot of bands who tend to talk write essays explaining their intent with a certain recording. As a result, the listener comes to appreciate the band more and actually make a substantial connection. And that's my lame explanation. Also, the B-side of this tape is just the A-side played backwards. —Ian Wise (fivetentapes.com)

NOMEANSNO: *Tour E.P. No.2: 12"*

When I reviewed Nomeansno's *Tour E.P. No. 1* a couple of issues ago, I stated that I needed a fix of the more upbeat style of NMN record. Well, it looks like I've got my wish! *Tour E.P. No. 2* kicks off with "Jubilation" which, in my opinion, just may be the best song they've put out since the *Worldhood of the World (As Such)* record. I wouldn't say poppy, but seriously catchy and forces you to sing along and bounce in your seat. It continues along this way throughout the record. Rather than the incredibly morose, bleak ballads, they've switched to their, "We know the world sucks, but we're gonna go down singing with a sarcastic smile on our faces" alter ego. My favorite facet of Nomeansno. The increasing difficulty in obtaining these

tour EPs is a little bothersome, though. Good luck hunting this one down. It's worth it! —Ty Stranglehold (Wrong, wrongrecords.ca)

NORMALS, THE:

"Almost Ready" b/w "Hard Core": 7"

Another reissue of a silly-rare, silly-good 45 (though the tracks have appeared on CD at least once last decade, on Airline 61's *Your Punk Heritage* compendium of the band's recorded history), from these New Orleans legends, originally recorded and released in 1978. "Almost Ready" is a fine bit of thud-punk that predates bands like the Spits by a number of decades, while the use of the title "Hard Core" beats DOA's use of the term for "Hardcore '81" by three years. Take that fly in the ointment, snobby historians! —Jimmy Alvarado (Last Laugh)

NOT ON TOUR: Self-titled: CD

Relentless, smashing girl-fronted hardcore out of Israel. About half the tracks on this CD are roughly thirty seconds long, just quick explosions of energy in your earholes. The metal-tinged guitars pounding away in the background are a nice contrast with Sima Brami's vocals. At times, songs lean on the poppier side of things, with some catchy choruses ("Don't Touch My Stuff") and bouncier guitars. Sima's voice is sweet enough to carry them, plus it has plenty of bite to dig your toes into on the heavier tracks. —Candice (Diner Junkie, dinerjunkie.com)

NUCLEAR FAMILY:

Self-titled: 12": 8-song EP

Strong, melodic DIY punk that threads the strident, defiant stance of Tilt to the anthemic crackle of Bikini Kill and the bike-down-a-steep-hill velocity of Black Rainbow. Unwrapped, that means the vocals are clear, loud, and sung with both smiles and sneers. The lyrics are deeply concerned with strong identity in the face of whelming social, societal, political, and religious odds. The music's tight, but heart-tight, not technician-at-cyborg-band-school tight. Fellow Razorcaker Daryl handed to this to me and said, "I have absolutely no doubt you'll like this." Fuck if he didn't hit the bullseye on that one. Really taken by this band. —Todd (Loud Punk)

NUCLEAR FAMILY:

Self-titled: 12": 8-song EP

Here's a record anyone who even remotely likes punk should listen to. They sound like a mix of early S.F. punk with U.K. influences and little bit like the Epidemics. The songs are tuneful, led by a guitarist who picks notes more than strumming chords. Any punk band worth a damn has a bass player that gives the songs the drive they need, and they definitely have that here. The singer can actually sing, as well. "Mistakes" has the most pop sound of all on here. It comes out of left field, but a nice switch up. "More of the Same" is my favorite on here, with lyrics that illustrate losing oneself in the day-to-day, crushing routine of work. I heard these guys have split up. Which is too

bad, because they wrote some really well-crafted punk that stands out above a lot of what's out there at the moment (and there's some really good stuff happening right now, so that's saying a lot). The labels are reversed, by the way. At least the copy I have. —M.Avrq (Loud Punk, loudpunk.com)

OCCULT DETECTIVE CLUB: *Tortures*: LP

This came with a tiny note on a rectangle of lined paper: "Alex from Maaster Gaiden's new band." That's publicity I can understand. Decoded, it means that in the middle of Texas another musical terror is spawning. Alex is a dude who channels bedroom recording ala Ryan Rousseau, Alicja Trout, and Ben Cooke into slippery anthems that tie high and low fi into seductive little knots—tied in a manner that you're not quite sure if they're pretty bows on presents or twisted wires set to detonate garage rock bomb blasts. (It's both.) From a Maaster Gaiden point of view, Occult Detective Club takes more breaths between notes and has injected a nice level of creepiness and bounce to the proceedings. Being so, distant echoes of the Adverts, The Ramones, and Roky Erickson and comparisons to and shared bills with contemporaries like Something Fierce wouldn't be too far off the mark. *Tortures* sounds effortless, juicy, and dire. As an aside, this is the first record I've ever seen that was made in Karlsruhe, the German city that was reportedly one of the heavy inspirations for Washington DC. —Todd (Red Lounge Records, redloungerecords.de)

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On its surface, yeah, it'd be easy as pie to write this off as some vainglorious attempt by some punkers of yore to make a quick cash-in on their former infamy and further besmirch what smidgeon of cred they had left. Making it easier still would be the fact that the label it's on is connected to *Vice* Magazine, which, if my memory of it is correct, is some hipster mag that fetishizes underground culture for folks who would've been beaten to a pulp if they'd ever had the temerity to step into Godzillas, Cathay de Grande, or Club Fuck. The problem with handily jumping to such conclusions, though, is the music contained on the four 7" discs up for discussion, which contain sixteen tracks of straight-for-the-jugular, no-frills, no-bullshit Southern California thug-punk. Very early Black Flag and Red Cross are the too-obvious references, considering the pedigrees of those responsible, but they are nonetheless fitting, with virtually all of the tracks here evincing the same short attention span song lengths and sparse, pointed lyrics about non-conformity, various psychoses, and the generally fucked up state of the world that continues to make the early work of the aforementioned bands so goddamned relevant. More importantly, instead of being saturated in that jaded, "We were doing this shit thirty years ago, kids" arrogance so many of their (and my) peers exude, the whole package—the music, the accompanying artwork, the

live performances—feels fucking *real* and dripping with a seeming sincerity that is often rare in this age of punk-as-career-move. Keith and the boys have something special on their hands here and it'll be interesting to see/hear if/how they evolve over time. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vice Music)

ONE DAY: Self-titled: 7"

The sound of modern Gainesville filtered through a turd. I couldn't get into this at all. Nice screen printed covers though. —Ryan Horky (Abandon Hope, myspace.com/abandonhoperecords)

OTTOWA: 12" EP

Ottawa were a Midwestern grind band in the mid-'90s, from the era of spazzing that lead up to the powerviolence explosion a couple of years later. These thirteen songs were originally on a split LP with Jihad, and have been remixed and re-released with new cover art as a 12" 45, minus the (inferior) Jihad side. I've had the original of this record since high school, and these short, furious songs made it onto a lot of mixtapes back then. I've been meaning to dust that record off, so this review gives me an awesome excuse to revisit an old favorite. I'm in my early thirties and am discovering that some of the music that I loved as a teenager has not held up well (Koff! Koff! Lifetime, ahem!). Luckily, Ottawa still shreds. The music is grindcore with two singers who don't do the stereotypical

dustbuster/nails on chalkboard back-and-forth. The songs are well written, too, swinging between blastbeats and half-speed parts to make dynamic hardcore blasts. You could file these guys alongside Infest, Crossed Out, Man Is The Bastard or The Locust before they got keyboards. —CT Terry (Residue, residue-records.com)

OUR OWN END:

Quit While You're Still Behind: CD

I don't know what to say about this other than that it's super generic youth crew hardcore. Gang vocals and all of that. The best thing about this band is the unintentional, homoerotic band name and album title. —Craven Rock (Self-released, myspace.com/ourownendmusic)

PARASYTIC: Poison Minds: LP

I thought this Richmond, VA's debut LP *Hymn* was great, but I feel this new release raises the bar. This time around, the crust seems to take a bit of a back seat while the thrash metal and Motörhead sound come to the forefront with sheer ferocity. I would compare the sound to the last few World Burns To Death releases. The production is superb with a biting and bright guitar sound accented with the pounding and solid tone of the bass leading the charge. The mixture of the two creates a soundscape of headbanging fury. The drum mix seems to be pulled a hair to the front to give the songs a thundering effect. I can picture every beat as they are being hit. The gravelly

vocals complete the barrage of power to this collection of eight songs. Saw them a few years ago live and they put on a great performance. Hopefully another tour out west is in the works for the future. —Donofthedeath (Vex, vex.rex@hotmail.com)

PARTING GIFTS, THE:

Strychnine Dandelion: LP

The latest project from Greg Cartwright (Reigning Sound, Oblivians, Compulsive Gamblers and numerous others) with Coco Hames of the Ettes. Apparently, the band came together just to record a single for Norton Records' Rolling Stones cover series but a full-length accidentally popped out. Cartwright continues to be a prolific songwriter (penning ten of the fifteen songs on the album) and there are no real duds here. The production sounds much like the latest Reigning Sound album (*Love and Curses*); very organ heavy. I actually kind of like this album a little more than *Love and Curses*. —Sal Lucci (In The Red)

PERENNIALS, THE: "My Side of the Mountain" b/w "This Whole Town": 7"

This 7" contains three catchy pop songs with a tinge of '60s influence. "My Side of the Mountain" rocks a Teenage Shutdown-style beat and bass line framing jangly guitars. "Savannah" is a simpler song in the same vein, while "This Whole Town" moves into more roots territory. There is no snot, but the songs take the

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retro influence into upbeat territory confidently. Good vocals. Good songs. —Billups Allen (Radicator)

PERENNIALS, THE: *Oh Kimmy: 7"*

I'm puking from my fever now, but I think this 7" is really sweet. It might be the meds or the flu, but The Perennials got a great dreamy, flowing sound. It could be anxious teenagers strumming and playing with energy over authority (that's big in my book), or it could be my head swirling, thinking about 1960s sock hops with local bands tearing it up. I do hear lyrics about girls not needing love anymore and trying to remember memories. Shit yeah, man. I think this is honest, kickin' garage-pop rock. I asked my wife to make sure: "Hell yeah, this is happy." —Speedway Randy (Eradicator, eradicatordiscs.bigcartel.com)

PERKELE: *Punk Rock Army: 7"*

This three-song record came out as an appetizer to the new Perkele full-length and it's another fine release from this popular Swedish streetpunk band. Fans will especially dig the corny, but awesome acoustic version of the old Perkele staple, "Heart Full of Pride," exclusive to this 7" only. It was pointed out to me not long ago that skins like some of the wimpiest music imaginable. No one would disagree with that fact, but the detractors with their noses in the air are missing out on some of the catchiest, most lovable bands around. Pride is lame, unless it's taking pride in

adoring seemingly asinine music. How asinine is it, then? —Art Ettinger (Oi! The Boat, oitheboat.com)

PHOENIX FOUNDATION, THE / HER SPECTACLES: *Split: 7"*

A pair of rather generic indie rock bands together on the same split 7". The most memorable thing about this record is that The Phoenix Foundation's name is a sweet '80s pop culture reference (Macgyver). —Paul J. Comeau (Unsane Asylum)

POISON PLANET: *Oblivious: EP*

So many reasons to like this record... Poison Planet crank out some blazing hardcore punk that has a rough and burly edge. Elements remind me of Negative FX, such as the vocals, and the straight-forward approach to the music. The guitar has a nice sound and the guy can actually play. I like how the bass is right up in the mix as well. More hardcore bands need to do this! There are some cool intros to the songs, and this stuff is as catchy as it is speedy. Then—something I unfortunately don't come across too often in today's punk scene—here's a band that actually has something of worth to say. Not one song on here is about what the "scene" means to them, or about straight-edge. Instead, they bring up animal rights, staying true to your ideals (as they say, "This is about something much greater than breaking Edge, or ceasing to be vegan/vegetarian. This is about selling out your soul

like a fucking coward"), religion, and apathy. Well worth your time and money. —M.Avr (ThirdXParty, thirdxparty.blogspot.com)

PORN STARS OF HORROR / STUPID IN STEREO: *Split: 7"*

For a band with one of the worst names ever, the Porn Stars Of Horror are surprisingly rad. Straightforward horror hardcore that gets bonus points for doing something so mind-blowingly obvious that I can't comprehend how it has never been done before (or how, if it has been done before, I've missed it): they turn the "verata clatoo nicto" chant from *Army of Darkness* into a song. Of course, they lose major points not only because they did not use the official spelling of the chant (which originally appeared in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*), but because they chant the three words in the wrong fucking order (should be "klaatu barada nicto"). If you're keeping track, that puts them into negative points. If you're going to mess with nerd stuff, you best do it right. Stupid In Stereo's side is a match thematically, even if their pop punk sound doesn't mesh. They pay tribute to Ash and the evil dead with a song called "Tree Love." And they spell everything correctly. —MP Johnson (Unrepentant)

PUTAS MIERDAS:

La Nacion Mas Pobre: EP

As far as I know, Mexico is largely ignored and unknown for its great

punk/hardcore bands, which is quite a mystery to me since I am fairly certain that a country so large and internally oppressed surely must have some punks screaming into microphones somewhere. Putas Mierdas from Guadalajara are everything I was hoping to hear from the land of my ancestry: pissed off, mid-paced, basic but not bland punk rock drawing influences from the early '80s such as Nardcore and Eskorbuto. I hope they don't take offense to this, but their singer seriously sounds like a punk rock Alex Lora, vocalist for a well-known Mexican rock band called El Tri. Stoked that they're helping to put Mexico on the punk rock map. —Juan Espinosa (Adelante, adelantedisos@gmail.com)

QUEERS, THE:

Back to the Basement: CD

Another superb addition to the ever-increasing discography of New Hampshire's finest. There's an instrumental and a Black Flag cover. But there's also the classic songwriting you have come to expect from Joe Queer and the boys. With titles like "Titfuck" and "Fucked in the Head," would you expect any less? And, really, there is no fucking way this could be a bad Queers record with a drummer named Hog Log behind the kit. Case closed. —Sean Koepenick (Asian Man)

RATIONAL ANTHEM / BILLY

RAYGUN: Split: 7"

Man, when I hear stuff like this I really feel old. Sarasota, Florida's

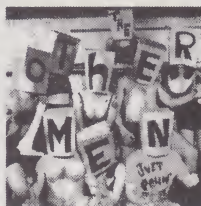
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Rational Anthem and Portsmouth, New Hampshire's Billy Raygun deliver a 7" scoop of some pop punk that didn't really do it for me. Both bands stay in a comfortable zone that feels neither dangerous nor particularly passionate—both traits of what I look for in all music, not just punk rock. Rational Anthem pretty much stick to the formula while Billy Raygun adds a little of the awkward, geeky to the mix to slightly better results. —Garrett Barnwell (Traffic Street/John Wilkes Booth)

RATIONS: For Victory: CD

Raw, angry, political punk that reminds me of a band you'd hear on a Lookout comp in the mid-'90s. You know, the band that didn't sound remotely like the other bands, but you ended up loving their song and tracking down the LP. This ain't bad, but would benefit greatly from a slightly less crappy recording and a better drummer. (I'm no recording snob either, but this sounds like it was recorded in a trashcan. Not one of those fancy trashcans either—a really crappy one.) —Ryan Horky (86'd, 86drecordsandfanzine.com)

RESTORATIONS:

Strange Behavior: 12" EP

Four songs here and they're all rich with space and breathing room; it's mid-tempo post punk that meanders rather than thunders along, and it generally works pretty well. It's the vocals that are the saving grace here—they're rough and haggard and offset the frequent delicacy of the music itself. Starting out with the first

side, "Title Track" and "Linear Notes," I can definitely understand the references I've heard to Lucero, though Restorations are much more playful and odd—dig that weird guitar freakout at the end of "Title Track." The closer, "Documents," takes a long and wandering path from start to finish, and closes the record out on an even more slowed-down, somber note. All in all, this one come across as pretty underwhelming at first listen but manages some atmosphere after a few rotations. —Keith Rosson (Paper + Plastic)

RETURNABLES, THE: Self-titled: CDEP

Really good power pop that sounds like it borrows equally across the '78 to early '80s timeline, and still manages to sound a bit like a Chicago punk band circa Naked Raygun. This includes four studio tracks recorded in March 2005 and three live songs from a June 2005 show. A month after the show, the singer was killed in a bizarre car accident—a girl driving ninety MPH plowed into another car stopped at an intersection. She later said it was a suicide attempt. All three people in the other car died. The girl broke her ankle and only served a few years in prison. Note to the suicidal: please do not kill other people while you're trying to kill yourself. Thanks to Dirtnap for putting this out. —Maddy (Dirtnap)

RIGHT IDEA: Self-titled: 7"

Aw, man. It's *really* hard to review "youth crew"-styled hardcore at this point in my life. Look, I got syringe and ink Youth Of Today fist tattoo when

I was fourteen years old. I sang for a band called New Direction before I had armpit hair. I still listen to Bold. A lot. But I dunno... it's just *so* hard to review new bands like this without accusing them of being complete clones. Perhaps it's because I haven't been part of that world in so long, or perhaps, as was certainly the case "back in the day," imitation is indeed the sincerest form of flattery in the "old school" hardcore genre. And it's not that I don't love *any* new hardcore. I'm still a total fiend for killer new hardcore bands (see the Rot In Hell review), but I just cannot begin to enjoy this Right Idea record. It just... it offers nothing unique or interesting at all. Okay, so if you were just getting into this stuff today then maybe you'd love this, and you could go and see the band play, which is always a plus (although with the amount of reunions in the past few years, you can go and pick-up-change to most of the classic NYHC bands...), and you could have a really great adolescence, as I did, as a clean cut hardcore kid, root beer in hand. But for those of you who've been down this road before, I'd say it's pretty safe to just cruise on by. —Dave Williams (Refuse)

RISPOSTA: Schvalen Byl Novy Rad: LP

The one country that does crust and grindcore correctly is, hands down, the Czech Republic. Just about every band of either genre that I hear from there is great. Risposta are yet another band from that country that does crust core right. The music is dark, heavy, abrasive, fast, and interesting: a mix

of hardcore with metal (check out some of the solos!). Everything on this record is wired down tight as hell. The drummer is an absolute rager. The drums are bashed to hell and sound like rolling thunder one minute, then they chop away with speed with some crazy fills here and there. "Nabruste Noze!" is the definite standout cut. Great opening that reminds me a little of late '80s youth crew, in that it's as hard as it is melodic, then they rip into the main body of the song which loses no momentum. "Iluze a Mytus" has a nice guitar break at the end that floats over the wall of distortion and gives the song a little more depth. If you like the heavy and dark stuff, then, by all means, get this record. Nice lyric/collage booklet as well. —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

RIVER CITY REBELS:

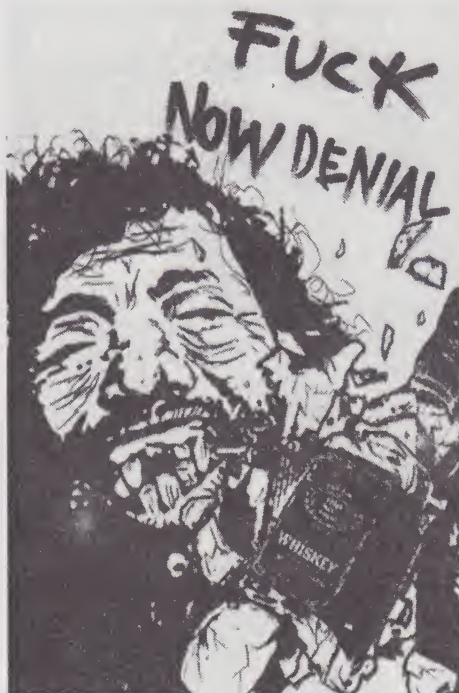
In Love/Loveless: LP

If Bruce Springsteen met D Generation and had several babies, that would be strange. It would be even stranger if some of those babies started a band. Spoiler: It's happened. If this record were a cereal, it'd be Banana Nut Crunch. Bananas? Nuts? Together? No thank you. Oh, and they used to be a ska band. Ack. —Maddy (Mod House)

ROT IN HELL:

As Pearls before Swine: CD

I don't really need to reiterate my love for Deathwish Records' choice of signees, but let's just say that Rot In Hell was yet another great call. I've been



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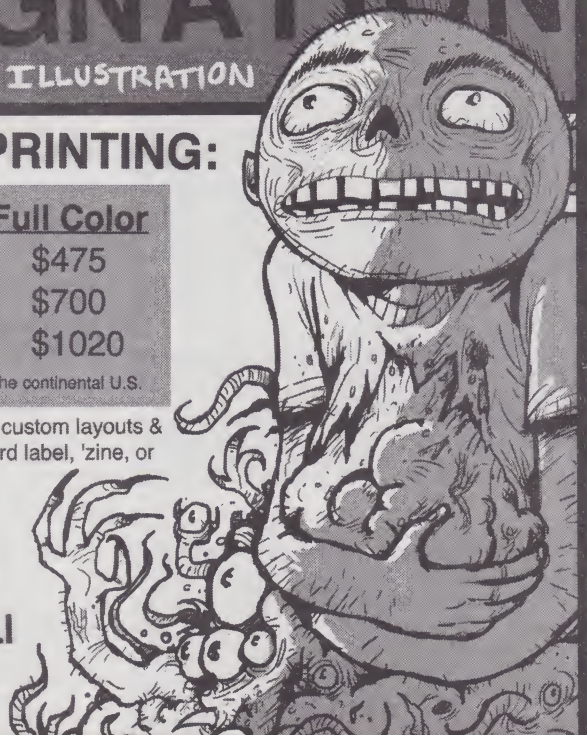
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incredibly intrigued by this band since their first few 7" releases (available on the *Hallways of the Always* collection) and when I got wind of an upcoming LP on by far my favorite hardcore label, I was mad pumped. And yep, it fucking rips. Vile, vicious, raging hardcore from the Ringworm/Holy Terror school with heaps of ambiance in the form of instrumental interludes and spoken samples. Everything one would hope for from one of the newer torchbearers of dark, evil hardcore. Phenomenal. —Dave Williams (Deathwish, deathwishinc.com)

ROUGH KIDS: "Into the '00s" b/w "So Sophisticated": 7"

Rough Kids sound like The Nerves getting in a not-joking, my-fist, your-face, no-I'm-not-going-to-apologize fight on stage. Peter Case-style hooks are played through what sounds like a smog and battery acid effects pedal. The energy on both songs sounds like kicks through the bass drum during the middle of the set, and the drummer answers by hitting the kit harder. Ratcheted anxiety. I have no idea of the inner dynamic of the Rough Kids; it's just that the tension's palpable inside of these two songs. If the idea of pop power wanting to get into a fight sounds good, you can't do better than Rough Kids. Another strong 7" from these guys. —Todd (Margin Mouth/Rough)

SALVATION: *Mortality Interactions*: 12"

Pennsylvania's Salvation have tossed a wrench into the hype machine with

this record. With the "mysterious guy" craze finally winding down, but hardcore records being churned out overnight by the hundreds, getting by on mere "energy," Salvation have produced a full-length with all the vim and vigor of their peers, but with an actual depth and continuity of the seasoned band they are. The crushing riffs and tortured, distorted vocals lend themselves to more ambitious cults of the underground, but the drums provide a steady post-punk backdrop to the mess. The album remains mostly mid-tempo, which makes the moments of thrashing in songs like "Parallels of Inheritance" come as genuine surprise. The result is sort of a hardcore version of Joy Division that is somehow both devastating and danceable, but with an intent that remains clear and uninhibited. While some bands in hardcore are taking cues from the bleaker aspects of post-punk as a way to validate their artistic merit, the influence has typically been limited to the visual aids and brief, moody interludes. Salvation, on the other hand, have made no pretense about their craft and have achieved the sound on their own. The results are absolutely beautiful. My favorite record of 2010. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack)

SAMIAM: *Orphan Works*: 2 x LP

I'm going to be perfectly honest; this is the first time I've ever actually listened to Samiam. These recordings are a collection of some studio outtakes, covers, and live on the radio sets taken

from their more "popular" active years. What a sucker I was for ignoring them for this long. These songs are earnest, heartfelt, and deeply emotional for a band that at one point was heavily commercially promoted. It makes sense why people with no actual taste in music never caught on. I don't know what my excuse is. —Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

SAUCERS / ALLIES: 78-81: LP

One of the things that too often gets lost in the history of the punk rock pigeonhole is the sheer breadth of diversity in sound the term encompassed in its early years. Terms like "77 punk" usually refer to some Dolls/Ramones variant, totally ignoring the fact that harder to pin down acts like Patti Smith, the Voidoids, and Television were cranking out brilliantly fucked up music right next to Dee Dee and his needle-pal Thunders. Also lost in this age of instant, intercontinental connections is just how different those influences would manifest themselves in isolated pockets around the country, from New Orleans to Los Angeles to, in this case, Berkeley, California. Saucers were one of Berkeley's early punk champions, formed by guitarist Dave "Slave" Velasquez and Farfisa-flogging vocalist Joey Michaels. According to the liner notes, within a week of the two getting together, a two-track recording of their tune "Piggy's Jukebox" was in local radio station KALX's regular rotation. Bassist Shelly Wolfe and drummer Jake Smith soon rounded out the lineup and by 1980 the band

(along with Romeo Void, no less) was being lauded as the year's best new band by Ginger Coyote's seminal fanzine *Punk Globe*. The band's two studio and four live cuts here feature a more sophisticated approach than the average three-chord thud punk fodder, with an organ-drenched yet muscular sound with vocals that are more Mothersbaugh than Johansen, mixing political outrage with a streak of sarcastic humor. Soon after their *Punk Globe*'s kudos, however, Michaels and his Farfisa were gone, and the rest of the band soldiered on under the new name The Allies. Likewise, The Allies side of the record sports two studio and four live tracks, and showcases a band with a more conventional guitar-driven sound than the Saucers, though the intelligence is still very much in place and, in the case of "Cold Act," a reggae influence was starting to creep into the sound. By 1981, then-married Shelly and Dave's marriage unraveled, and the band followed suit, with Dave joining Necropolis Of Love and Jake Smith going on to play guitar for Bay Area peace punk icons Crucifix and an early lineup of Faith No More, among other things, and the rest of the members spreading out to various parts of the world. All told, this is one of those rare compendiums of rare, now-obscure punk bands that is as much a good listen as it is a time capsule piece that shows that punk sonic revolution was a lot more diverse than at first blush. —Jimmy Alvarado (raveuprecords.com)

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SAVAGE BREWITALITY:

The Last Slice: LP

Dudes from bands you know doing eleven thrash songs about Zombie Jesus, Fundar the Brewbarian, smoking weed, and *Full House*. Would have made a funny demo to hand out to friends, but instead we're treated to full-color covers and inserts, translucent vinyl, the whole bit. Musically well done, for sure, but the disappointment creeps in when you realize all they're howling about is *America's Funniest Home Videos*. If we're talking novelty bands, I'll take Jud Jud over these guys any day. —Keith Rosson (Fest, no address)

SCREECHING WEASEL:

Television City Dream: CD

I didn't think that this would ever happen: *Television City Dream* has been reissued. There are a couple of reasons that I never thought that I would see this reissued. First, it has more or less remained readily available on both CD and vinyl since its initial release. The other reason that I never thought that this one would be reissued is that it isn't that great. Despite my thoughts, it was reissued. It includes five bonus tracks, a new mix, and new artwork. Four of the five bonus tracks were originally released on the *Four on the Floor* comp that Panic Button did. That comp had twelve other good songs by three other bands; *TCD* has three other good songs. "Dirty Needles," which was also on the *Short Music for Short People* comp, "Outside of You," and "Identity Crisis" compromise the three good songs from

the original issue. The other thirteen songs on here are not necessarily bad, but they are bad for Screeching Weasel songs. Those thirteen songs seem to go one of two ways. They either go too aggressive for SW or they are on the level of SW rip off acts. Since it has been about a decade since I listened to the original issue, I can't say for sure what's different about the mix; it sounds like the vocals were turned up while everything else was flattened. Weasel has never had great cover art, but the original cover was pretty decent (a piece by Aldo Giorgini, the father of Mass). The new cover art is far from decent: a skeleton in business attire with its skull on fire, holding a TV in a city afloat. Given that the *Four* comp shouldn't be too hard to find and that the original issue of *TCD* may be lingering in a used bin near you, this reissue is inessential and easy to skip. —Vincent (Fat, fatwreck.com)

SERIOUS TRACERS: Self-titled: 7" EP

Rumbling, bass-heavy lo-fi punk with some French (and maybe new wave?) influences. This EP is a spastic, fuzzed-out punch straight to the gut. Songs start at a breakneck pace and descend into these fragmented, jolty guitar melodies. Strap yourself in and prepare to wear the grooves outta this vinyl. —Candice (Sick Thought, no address listed)

SEVEN FOOT SPLEEN: *Reptilicus: CD*

A collection of tracks, some from seven-inchers, some comp tracks, and some heretofore unreleased, with dates

ranging from 1995-'98. Like a variant on Monty Python's "Spam" skit, you get sludge, sludge, and more sludge, with a heaping side of sludgy punk on the side—all of it loud, strangely, and fucked up, just how ye like it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tsuguri)

SEX ROBOTS: *Night Moves: LP*

Gotta appreciate when a band puts in some great work, and it's clear early on Sex Robots do just that here. Deciding on an approach that mixes early '80s rock with pop punk and playing it pretty straight down the line, they come up with a slew of catchy tunes that are smart, infectious, and blessedly thin of Ramones aping. Very nice. —Jimmy Alvarado (Roadhouse Tunes, no address)

SHIRKS, THE:

"Disease" b/w "No Way St.": 7"

A band that wears their Saints influence on their sleeve, The Shirks just keep getting better and better. The band plays Ramones-style power chord punk that keeps getting tighter and faster. Good vocal play, hammer-down guitar riffs, and a tight rhythm section comprises their third 7", which is just a white sleeve with black writing on it: again including no information about themselves. The whole thing smokes. Punk. Punk. Punk. —Billups Allen (Windian, no address listed)

SHORES: *Coup de Grace: LP*

Slowcore was an indie subgenre in the '90s, characterized by a moody sound

with whispered vocals and sneaky grooves. Some of the popular slowcore bands were Slint, Low, and Codeine. Shores are staying true to the style. It sounds like they recorded this record in a giant cabin in the woods, each band member standing twenty yards from the next. I tend to find this type of stuff tedious, hookless, and devoid of joy, and Shores are no exception, but this record is heavy on atmosphere and grew on me as it spun, drawing me into its hushed, dark world. —CT Terry (No Idea)

SIRCUSCUS: *Brutal Enthnology: CD*

A ten-song, twenty-minute disc from Finland. SircusCUS identify themselves as ethno/circus rock and it prominently features plenty of Middle Eastern and Eastern European influences along with angular song changes, some heavy riffs, and ample energy. The main comparison that comes to mind is the cerebral punk mindfuck of NoMeansNo, but with a bit more stoner metal and hardcore influences cropping up. It's a fine release if you are looking to explore some envelope pushing artpunk. —Jake Shut (Self-released)

SIVLE SI DOG: *Room 30: CD*

Man, I just couldn't get into this record, a reissue of Sivle Si Dog's last recording from 1997. For the most part, this is grind-your-face-into-the-pavement punk rock with churning, frequently spooky-sounding guitars and vocals dripping with punk rock *sturm und drang* (as well as welcome doses of immaturity), but it just wasn't



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for me. I think what puts me off is that I'm not into the breakdowns and tempo changes that SSD have in their songs; such switches consistently create an effect of two separate songs sewn awkwardly together like a musical Frankenstein's monster. But that's just me. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Girth)

SMOKE OR FIRE: *The Speakeasy*: CD

The third full length from this band originally from Richmond finds them exploring new sounds and pushing their songwriting capabilities with spellbinding results. Joe McMahon is asking a lot more questions on this release, and the world does not seem to be providing any answers. "Monsters Among Us" asks, "I'm trying to find a way to understand how people justify how much they take/white collared crimes by well-dressed thieves everyday in the casinos on Wall Street." "Neon Light" weaves a downtrodden tale of someone looking for redemption on an off night through the bottom of a drink. It's not pretty, but it works. Politics also weighs in on songs like "1968" and "Honey, I Was Right about the War." Musically, McMahon's songs are powered by the one-two punch of Gwomper on bass and Ryan Parrish on drums. Fiery guitar leads from Jeremy Cochran brings it all together on each track. This is a rock and roll record that shows that you can think and burn all at the same time. A must-have for your collection. —Sean Koepenick (Fat)

SOCIAL UNREST: *Songs for Sinners*: EP

Don't believe the sticker on the cover that claims this is their best material since *Rat in a Maze*. That's a tall order, and though this record isn't bad, it doesn't come close to *Rat in a Maze* or any of the early, or later, SU material. Social Unrest are definitely one of my all-time favorite bands. I love everything from *Making Room for Youth* to *Now and Forever*, but I'm not blinded by fandom to let things get a pass. The material on here is good. "High Rollers" should have been put on the B-side, as it comes across as a throwaway, and the two songs on the B-side, "Get It Together" and "No One's Tool" should have been the A-side. In fact, "No One's Tool" is the best of the bunch, and recalls the early years of these guys the best. Parts of it remind me of "General Enemy" (from *Rat in a Maze*). One thing is for sure. Creetin K-Os still has a great voice. A good bellow, but the lyrics are intelligible. I hope these guys write more songs like this—fast, melodic, and tight—all the ingredients they used with great results in the past. —M.Avrq (Dr. Strange, drstrange.com)

SPACE STATION 5: *If This Doesn't Mean the World to You*: CD

Oh Space Station 5, you have a horrible band name and your sound is derivative of a million other emo pop bands out there, and yet I find myself falling for your smooth, radio-friendly sound. Why? What's that you say? Hooks? A reminiscence of

other mildly popular, polished bands in style amongst teenage girls? Eight songs about relationships, parents, and being young? On second thought, maybe this really isn't my thing. —Kurt Morris (Livid)

SPAZZ: *Crush Kill Destroy*: LP

I still have the sticker on my sock drawer: "Making powerviolence a cheezy catchphrase since 1989!—Slap-A-Ham Records." Oh, powerviolence. How big the bubble got, then popped to almost nothing. It was a good run (being generous: 1990-2000). It rallied against pop punk. Think of it as the angrier, more abstract, crushing, funnier, crushinger yet, hostile cousin to Lookout! Records in an East Bay smackdown. Spazz was a "power(violence)" trio of Dan Boleri, Chris Dodge, and Max Ward. Spazz, in particular, introduced Snufalufagus (played at 78 RPM) and The Cookie Monster's (at 16 RPM) voices to blast beats and "After School Special"-style soundbites into powerviolence's oeuvre. And Slap-A-Ham—founded by original No Use For A Name guitarist and Me First And The Gimme Gimmes liner notes writer Chris Dodge—was at one of powerviolence's epicenters, releasing between sixty and seventy records during its eight-year existence. Max's label 625 Thrashcore is responsible for this re-issue and it sounds and looks great. And Chris Dodge now lives in Alhambra. It seems to me that he can't seem to get away from things with "ham" in them. —Todd (625 Thrash, 625thrash.com)

SPIDER BAGS: *Take It Easy Tonite*: 7"

There seems to be a real trend at the moment of bands playing vaguely garagey, vaguely psych, fuzzed-out, lo-fi music. This band perfectly encapsulates the sound that I seem to be hearing a lot of. Fans of Hozac Records and Columbus Discount will find a whole lot to like here. —Mike Frame (Churchkey)

SPRAINS, THE: *Imitate Art*: CD

The second I started to enjoy any of these songs, they end up taking an overwrought turn toward mall punk town. Are you looking for all the conventional trappings of whiny emo pop punk in one CD? If so, this is a great specimen. Most of these songs are pretty juvenile, and the lyrics will grate if you pay enough attention. For instance, on "Pity Party": "pity party/it's a pity party/are you feeling sad or are you feeling sorry?" As I type this out, I can hear the trite melody smashing around in my brain, probably destroying some happy childhood memory. I'm not necessarily saying I have a problem with song titles like "I Farted (Let's Get Started)" or ones about gangrene asses, but songs about butts need to be fun and/or funny, otherwise they end up sounding way too much like a middle school talent show. I realized about halfway through listening how spot-fucking-on the title of this CD is. The Sprains aren't creating anything new, just rehashing a genre that is pretty dead tired already. Maybe when these guys graduate high school, I'll check back and see if they've moved on to

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any other parts of the body. —Candice (Cheapskate, cheapskaterecords.com)

STAMFORD BRIDGE / BASTARDS CHOIR: Split: 7"

I like me some of that "oi" type of punk rock, but I can get a little picky about it. As I dropped the needle on this record, I read the back and realized that Stamford Bridge is essentially a one man band featuring Carl from The Templars (with Phil Templar on drums). I love The Templars, so I geared myself up for the unexpected. Stamford Bridge is more of an oi-tinged pop group—and it's really amazing! I am on the hunt for more from these guys now! I couldn't imagine how Bastards Choir could hold their own after that, but I'll be damned if they didn't kick ass as well. Super catchy songs that have to do with roasting pork and such. A real Beltones flavor to the sound that I loved. What a great split record! —Ty Stranglehold (Oi! The Boat)

STATE OF FRANKLIN: The Cancer E.P.: CD

Boy, do I feel like a heel bagging on a song whose only lyrics are "Fuck you, cancer." Maybe if I knew the backstory, it would mean more to me. As it is, it's just rudimentary punk, played with minimal energy and recorded inside a glass of water. —CT Terry (Girth, girthrecords.com)

STRAIT A'S: Detention Span: CD

Apparently, this is a reissue of an out of print EP. I was initially thrown off by the goofy name, but there aren't really

any good band names left anyway, so I guess I better get used to it. This is actually pretty solid. *Detention Span* comes across as total Screeching Weasel-worship, right down to the melodic pop punk guitar solos, but I'm fine with that. Totally worth checking out. —Ryan Horky (Moonquake)

STREET EATERS / SEVERANCE PACKAGE: Split: 7"

Street Eaters: "Frigid Digits" is a call and response song that works as an extended metaphor. It could easily be a conversation between a lonely Eskimo and their pet seal/future meat. Typically, it's open to the interpretation—like the numbing, dead-end, fattening existence of the suburbs—and that's a nice bit of crystal to look at music through. Nice stuff. Severance Package: When John Geek handed this to me for review, he wrote it for me. "It's along the lines of Dead Moon." Thanks, John. It definitely is, with a little less of a tendency to hang out in the jams, but keeping the song open for a lot of space. Smart, sparse punk rock. Their song, "Miseducated," is about universities for profit. (And them being a bad idea.) —Todd (Dead Broke / Dirt Cult / Lost Cat)

STREET EATERS: "Ashby and Shattuck" b/w "Mother": Picture 7"

Street Eaters seem to be concerned with archeological time—like the millions of years it takes to form stalactites to form in a cave. Doing so, the Street Eaters have already seen the collapse

of civilization and are making music for insects, more than humans. Not really, but it's a different headspace for a husband and wife bass and drums duo and it's an interesting way to approach making music. Aurally, think of a more community-based Dutch band The Ex (who they cover) and the fun-art-jam-exhilaration of Shellshag (who put out the record). The pieces fit well together. Whereas Fleshes—another band John's in—deals in maximizing the maximums, Street Eaters maximize the minimums. Both approaches work very well, while ending at two very different musical conclusions. Strong stuff. It's really accented by Megan's artwork on the picture disc. —Todd (Starcleaner)

SUPERDESTROYERS: "Save to the Urge" b/w "You're Being Erased": 7"

Both songs suffer from sophomore punk riffs and uninteresting ideas. The singer sounds as if he could belt it out, but he never quite gets there—as if he has a good voice but isn't angry about anything. It reminds me of when a favorite old band gets together after thirty years to put out an album and it sounds out of touch. —Billups Allen (No address listed)

SURROGATES, THE: Demo II: Fall 2010: CDEP

A very promising five-song demo that clocks in under ten minutes. The first track is a very engaging post-rock instrumental, but the following four tracks are firmly in the melodic punk camp. Regardless of genre, all five


songs immediately struck me far above average. Overall, this album plays well to the *Razorcake* audience, straddling the sweet spot of catchy melodies but with the appropriate grit for a punk rock release. Fans of bands like Dan Padilla, Chinese Telephones, and Tiltwheel should be coming to this like ducks to water. —Jake Shut (Self-released)

TALKY TINA: Don't Go: CDEP

A band named after a *Twilight Zone* episode featuring "Talky Tina," a creepy doll. ("My name is Talky Tina, and you'll be sorry!") Features a member of the mod pop band The Odd Numbers, which is a good sign, and this band is pretty good, too, but I wish the guitar was louder and that the whole thing was more garagey (think: King Khan and/or the use of tambourines). But I must say that they are the first band I'm aware of to write a mod song about the Jehovah's Witness, and for that, I must say: Thank you, Talky Tina. So, if you liked the Odd Numbers and/or mod revival stuff, you'd probably be into this, but I think Talky Tina is capable of much more. Talky Tina, I will be watching you, and you won't be sorry! D'oh! If this were a cereal, it'd be Gremlins. (Yes, they did make a cereal based on the movie, and it existed for a brief time in the 1980s). Tasty, but if they added marshmallows, think of the possibilities! —Maddy (Lost Highway)

TEENAGE MOODS: Self-titled: 7"


A lazy comparison would be: Cross Slumberland Records and the early '90s



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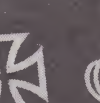



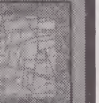







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output of K Records with the Vaselines. Super catchy pop with a somewhat lo-fi edge. While there's a sugary sweet (after all, these guys are the "Sugar Band"—"sweet! sweet!") side, there's also a somewhat rough sound in the music. No polish, which give these two songs even more charm. These songs are unbelievably catchy, addictive, and will burn themselves into your memory within two listens. I can guarantee you will find yourself singing along to these songs, and singing them while out and about doing whatever it is you do. I want more! I like this. I really likes this! —M.Avr (Teenage Moods, myspace.com/teenagemoods)

TILTWHEEL: "Teach Your Children Hell" b/w "Believe": 7"

My Cher's songs-made-to-video memory is full of holes. But since Tiltwheel's a San Diego band, San Diego has a huge naval base, and Davey's really charming, that the powers that be would allow a video of Davey in a lacy, buttless thong and leather jacket, suggestively straddling a 16" gun, then prancing on the deck of a destroyer while sailors cheer to his lip synching. That'd be awesome in my book and the type of answer I have queued up when the next person asks me what I'd do with a million dollars. This 7" was supposed to be tour support for a European tour that didn't happen, so it's totally feasible that "Teach Your Children Hell," that's also on *The High Hate Us* LP, wasn't out at that time. The B-side's a cover of Cher, and for those who've heard

Leatherface's cover of Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors," it weirdly illustrates how well crafted musically—and how tender the words to—the originals were. —Todd (Drunken Sailor, myspace.com/drunkensailorrecs)

TOO MANY DAVES: Weekend at Dave's: CD

Most of the time, I would quickly dismiss anything that had lyrical themes such as getting fucked up, fucking up, and not giving a fuck. It's not that I have anything against any of those things, but to revel in such typically ain't my thing—I can be uptight like that. That said, it's funny what some guitar work can do to me. More specifically, it's funny what Davey Quinn's guitar work can do to me. As it has made me enjoy Too Many Daves regardless of the lyrical content, it could quite possibly make me find myself tolerating the rants and raves of a young earth creationist. I'm just glad that he hasn't provided the soundtrack for such nonsense, because I would probably check it out. —Vincent (ADD)

TOUCH ME, SATAN: Festival of Lights: 7"

Six punk'n'roll tunes that conjure up images of a garage-y version of the New York Rel-X. Lo-fi and all the better for it! Touch Me, Satan need no slick production to demonstrate their chops! Bully! The vocalist does a great job using her voice as a counterpoint on several of the songs, which creates some satisfying harmonies with the guitars. This is like Lava soap: gritty yet cleansing. Clear vinyl! —The Lord Kveldulfr (no label)

TYVEK: Nothing Fits: CD

I got a fever of 102.9, which should help with the reviews. I really like Tyvek's last 12", but this has less noodling songs in between the big blasts. Fast-driving, guitar-happy rockers—this album is the *Tokyo Drift* of Detroit garage rock. A little more aggro than earlier singles, still peppy, still desperate as all hell, with drained singing over a wave of sound. In their older song, "Frustration Rock," there was more space in between the instruments. You felt you could hear the strings stretching and snapping—a treble party. Now it's a little more electric and fuzzy, making my brain itch. It's fucking fun. A little bit like The Gories moving into The Dirtbombs territory. Sorry, Tyvek, there is probably always a Gories connection due to everyone being from Detroit. But shit, great company. When I listen to Tyvek, I just wanna drive faster and turn harder. Good for the flu, too. —Speedway Randy (In the Red)

UGLY BEATS, THE: Motor!: CD

While the term "garage rock" most definitely fits 'em, these Austin ravens cover a lotta ground here. The opener, "Things I Need to Know," sounds like a lost gem from the '80s Paisley Underground that would've easily fit into the airplay rotation of most new wave radio stations of the era. The bulk of the remainder bounces across the '60s spectrum, from fuzzy garage stompers to jangly proto-psych, from Beatles to Byrds and back, with maybe a quick stopover in Peter & Gordonland. The performances and songwriting are

top notch and the whole package bears a feeling of authenticity that a good many others swimming in this pool these days can only hope to achieve. —Jimmy Alvarado (gethip.com)

ULTRA DOLPHINS: Alien Baby: LP

I used to see Virginia's Ultra Dolphins in Richmond in the early '00s, but now realize that I've never heard them recorded. I've just seen them on stage, jumping around while performing guitar heroics that would require the most intense concentration from other musicians. The crowds would go nuts, but the songs sounded patched together, like haphazard stacks of unmatched parts. That has changed with this album. They're slowed down their trippy, technical prog-punk and the vocals are sung, not screamed. The music still sounds like it's being played backwards in a weird time signature, but it builds in its own ways, progressing, and even returning to hooks. Like a foreign language, understanding the Ultra Dolphins' music requires immersion. I kept the record on my turntable for a week, until the hairpin turns made sense, and now I can enter their dimension and sing along. —CT Terry (Rorschach)

UNFUN: Pain Prescription: CDEP

This one's a nice surprise, in the sense that the Steinways/Huntingtons/Ramones-core ripoff I was expecting was nowhere to be found—if there were ever any sort of poppy veneer to this band it's long since

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been scraped off. This shit is dirty, ragged, messy, and blown-out, and it sounds absolutely great. While bands like Dear Landlord make the whole "earnest pop punk" thing sound effortless and a maybe little too snappy and glossy sometimes, a band like Unfun sounds like they're just barely holding their shit together, instrumentally, emotionally, and otherwise. And this is a great record because of it. The sound quality is raw as hell, the lyrics are like the polar opposite of a 7 Seconds record (meaning: you're *fucked*, it's *not* going to be okay, things are *terrible*), and there's no unnecessary qualities to this thing. A great, snarling mess of a pop punk record, like a truly furious Off With Their Heads but with more chops. Definitely worthwhile. —Keith Rosson (Moonquake)

UNKO ATAMA: Another Creature: CD
Super awesome Ramones core pop punk from San Francisco! They cover Stiv Bator's "I'm Not That Way Anymore," and it's awesome! They cover the Ramones' "Bonzo Goes to Bitburg," and it's awesome! They have a song called "Twinkle Twinkle UFO," no doubt named after a line in Screeching Weasel's "I Believe in UFOs," and it's awesome! They have lots of their own songs (personal favorite: "Tonight"), and they're awesome! If this were a cereal, it would be Froot Loops, and it would be awesome! Well done, Unko Atama, well done! —Maddy (Self-released?)

UNPATRIOTICS, THE: To Whom It May Concern: CD-R
(This review will attempt to be as bland as the piece of music that it represents.) This was a CD that contained music. It was street punk. Sometimes they sounded like Sham 69. There was a ska song, too. —Bryan Static (Freedom)

UNWELCOME GUESTS: Don't Go Swimming: CD
Unwelcome Guests from Buffalo, New York have released a twelve-song disc mixing alt country, Florida campfire punk, and energetic power pop. The upbeat numbers like "Might Be Broken," "Considering," and "Any Other Place" border on anthemic punk, but—even more precisely—like their fellow upstate New York brethren The Figgs. The majority of the disc is slower and more reflective than those tracks with clear nods to Americana. In particular, frequent similarities to the Old 97's with twangy guitar, walking basslines, and a lead vocalist that bears a striking sonic resemblance to Rhett Miller. However, even the ballads don't overstay their welcome with the longest track on the album running only a 3:08. The songs are economical and well crafted. I would recommend this one if you don't mind some heartland rock diluting your punk. —Jake Shut (Kiss Of Death)

UP! SCUMBAG: Reality TV Casualty: CD
This band's name is a reference to the British show *The Young Ones*, and they throw in a cover of the show's theme song. The singer sounds like

Billy Joe (Green Day), but more in a coincidental way than anything else. The first few songs on this are okay, but then they brought in a saxophone, and then they covered Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Sadly for Up! Scumbag, either one of these offenses is akin to running a red light during a driver's test: automatic fail. If this were a cereal, it'd be a bowl of regular Chex that you start eating and it's fine, but then you walk away for minute, come back, take a bite of mushy-cereal-nastiness, and say, "No thank you." —Maddy (45 Little Revolutions)

VACATION: The Do Shit Disc: CD
Six songs of frenetic pop punk from Cincinnati, Ohio's Vacation that brings Operation: Cliff Clavin to mind vocally. I really like what's going on here on all six tracks. The vocals are slightly blown-out, the guitars are fuzzy, and the rhythm section is teetering on one foot. The operative word here is "fun." I have a hunch that seeing these cats play a house party would be a pretty epic time. Not sure if this makes it any better, but I cannot quit staring at the awesome cover art... —Garrett Barnwell (Moonquake)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Pancake Productions Summer Sampler MMX: CD-R
I find records that feature a variety of musical stylings to be infinitely enjoyable, but only when the tunes are good. There's a wild diversity on this record: a bit o' hardcore, a bit o'

r&b/hip hop, some hippy-dippy shit, female-fronted torch-rock (decipher that!), folksy French accordion music, technotronics, etc. Some of it is actually quite good, but too much of what's put forth here is borderline crummy or outright lousy and proves that even though technology allows anyone to record and distribute their tunes, that doesn't mean that they *should*. Favorite moments: The Fantasy Four, "Open Wide"; Popular Mechanics, "Better Off in the End"; Mike Stansy, "I Am Mike Stansy"; Cardiac Arrest, "Old New"; Thomas, "Cherokee Street." At the same time, there are a few songs on here that I would rather rip out my intestines with a fork than hear again. —The Lord Kveldulf (Pancake Productions)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Personality Disorder: LP
According to the AZPunk website, this collaboration with the label May Cause Dizziness is their seventh, and latest, comp, and a fine one it is. Like all truly good punk comps, this "collection of Arizona punk" feels more like a showcase for local talent than some bullshit label sampler, and a variety of styles are represented, from lo-fi trashing to more sophisticated fare, courtesy of The Impossible Ones, Japanese Monsters, Casket Life, Streetside Prophet, Hotdog!, The Father Figures, Automatic Erasers, Good Men Die Like Dogs, Lenguas Largas, Cagematch, The Plainfield Butchers, Said Gun, BroLoaf, and Jason DeVore. Hell, even the cover art is brilliant. Only major gripe is that

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there ain't a sheet, little booklet thingie, or something else with some info on the bands representing here. Yeah, I imagine no shortage of info on each of them can be found on the website, but I'm an old bastard and prefer paper to processors any day. —Jimmy Alvarado (azpunk.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

The Ties That Bind: 7" + Cassette

On the No Breaks website, this is listed as "CD/tape," so I don't know if the tunes on the 7" represent what are to be found on the CD. That said, *The Ties That Bind* consists of four bands (Giant Bags Of Weed, Que' Mart?, Wristers, and Rock Paper Stupid) with "musical interludes" by Peter Stubb. For the most part, the thirty-plus tunes are satisfying blasts of punk/hardcore, but the sheer volume caused the songs to blend together in my mind. As a result, few were truly memorable. At five dollars this is one helluva deal in term of quantity, and the quality is there to be sure, but it gets lost in the enormity of the quantity. Regardless, I'm sure not sorry for having heard this. —The Lord Kveldulfr (No Breaks)

VIOLENT AFFAIR: Stand Trial: CD

Mohawks? Check! Stencil Lettering? Check! Post military occupation imagery? Check! We got us some hardcore punk rock here. I really liked what I was hearing. No new ground being broken, but "If it ain't broke...", right? Well, the one problem I came up against was the vocals. They just

seemed out of time with the music for pretty much the whole disc. I dunno, but with a band that can obviously play well, it becomes glaring when the vocals are just shouted over the top. It's too bad, really... —Ty Stranglehold (Unrepentant)

WARCOLLAPSE:

Crust as Fuck Existence: 12" EP

Originally released in 1995 as a CD on Distort, Barvak from Insane Society has wisely reissued this on vinyl, where it should have been all along. These four songs have aged considerably well. The overall mood of this record is very dark. Rather than hitting the listener with a bludgeoning assault, Warcollapse pull you in with two slow and forlorn songs on the A-side, "It's Time Too..." and "Massgenocide." The music is haunting and almost quiet. Think of later period Anti-Sect and Amebix mixed with Counterblast. The title track is the speediest of the bunch, but that eventually gives way to the slower darker side. "Encaged" is noisy and thunderous, as though the gates of hell have opened and, instead of attacking in a frenzy, they let their wrath just be. Definitely a high point in the crust realm. —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

WHITE GUILT: Self-titled: LP

Incredibly noisy hardcore that verges on being straight-up white noise at various times throughout the record. This makes all the noisy crust bands and lo-fi thrash bands sound tame in comparison. Think of a more misanthropic Drunks With

Guns crossed with early Disorder and Larm. The guitar is nothing but full-on distortion and feedback. It's like scratching sandpaper on the pavement and putting a contact mike on it. You can hear the bass in the din, and the drums give the songs a structure. The lyrics, which I really like, are remorseless and bleak in their outlook on the world around them. The sort of stuff you think and feel in those dark moments. The song with the most structure is "Race and Nation," which opens the record, but as it—and the songs that follow—continue, everything deconstructs into a noisier and noisier affair. The only peaceful moment comes at the end of "Comatose." I like the opening blasts of hellish noise on "Born a Victim/Born Ashamed." It sounds like hell is about to come down hard and wreck your fuckin' life. It's a slower more mid paced song, and, as a result, has a more ominous tone. If you like the recent Timebombs, and bands of that nature, you'll definitely like this. I'm hoping there are more records planned, and they come out to California soon. —M.Avrq (Video Disease, videodisease.com)

WINELOD: Winelord III: CD

My fever is still going strong but writing with the pitch—Winelord is helping, a good ol' rock'n'roll party, like a nice, cool washcloth on my head. Feels soothing. Not too much, but a solid thrust of sound and energy. They have been playing for some ten years at least, because I'd left Tucson then and they have continued to lay

down the rock law. Looks like the same girls in the band as before, from what I can tell from the rock names and the crazy photoshopped cover of them half-eaten by a giant horned dog (a cover deep in the Bloat Records tradition). Not as off-kilter as other Bloat bands (Mondo Guano, Doo Rag, Pork Torta, Bebe And Serge) but a fine, fine addition to them and your record player on the mantle. Fever still raging, but happy. —Speedway Randy (Bloat, bloatrecords.com)

WINGNUT DISHWASHERS UNION:

Burn the Earth, Leave It Behind: CD

Every once in a while I come across a record that, once I've finished listening to it, makes me say, "Wow. That really was time well spent." This is such a record for me, and it's what I think a punk rock singer/songwriter record should sound like: urgent and exuberant, varied in its music, and thoughtful in its lyrics. All sorts of musical influences creep into these songs and the final result is somewhat like a sonic patchwork in the best possible way—one doesn't normally realize how good a harmonica can sound on a punk tune. The variety of the melodies and instrumentation belies, however, the remarkable consistency this record achieves since the fundamental thesis never wavers: resist the powers that be and be a slave to no one and no thing. Great record. —The Lord Kveldulfr (D.I.Y. Bandits, wingnutdishwashersunion@hotmail.com)

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WOMEN IN PRISON: Demo: Cassette

Women In Prison bring six ragers on this curious little cassette. The guitars are of the buzzsaw variety and the vocals are treated with some serious echo ala Flipper, which aren't necessarily bad things. I would love to see a lyric sheet as I suspect there is probably a little more going on lyrically than I can make out with such song titles as "The Births of Rot" and "Strange Waves." In any case, releases like this one restore my faith in punk rock and you can't ask for any better recommendation than that, can you? —Garrett Barnwell (Sick Thought, trekbg@yahoo.com)

WOMEN IN PRISON: Demo: Cassette

You had me at the band name. Then when I hear lyrics like, "I resist Christian morals..." (from "The Births of Rot") I get all weak kneed. So nice to hear. Are they garage? Are they hardcore? Who really cares? The music on here rips! Loud, ugly, burly low end, and fucked up! Kind of sounds like a mix of No Trend, Flipper, and Black Flag. The guitar and bass are one big mass of distortion, the vocalist sounds a little "off," and the drums chop it up nice and hideous. Starts off with some early Black Flag style in the form of "Suicidal Exit," then they crank it up with songs like "Strange Waves" and "Reaction." I like the guitar solo in the song "Circles & Circles." It's simple, dirty, and to the point, but a nice touch. "Shovel" sounds heavily influenced by Flipper, with the repetitive riff, length, and the way the vocals are delivered.

Great way to end the tape. I hear that someone from Total Abuse is in this band. Hmmm... Seriously, one of the best demos I've ever heard. —M.Avr (trekbg@yahoo.com)

XTRA VOMIT / TROPIEZO: Split: 7"

Xtra Vomit from Michigan blaze through their five songs of this split with unrelenting speed and a keen sense of knowing just how much youth crew influence is tolerable: quite impressive. I can't say enough good things about Tropiezo. Criminally underrated thrash from Puerto Rico who have the uncanny ability of not being able to write a bad song. Can't go wrong with this split. —Juan Espinosa (Discos De Hoy, discosdehoy@yahoo.com)

YOUR PEST BAND/ EINE KLEINE CHINMUZIK: Split: 7"

Punk rock! How could I not like this? EKC are from Milwaukee and play awesome, fast pop punk with a slight Bent Outta Shape influence and an overall influence of basement pop punk excellence! If you don't like EKC, you are dumb! If they were a cereal, it'd be Rice Krispie Treats! (For the cereal layperson, RKT is packed with sugar but not in the ridiculous MTX quantities found in Lucky Charms. It's a rock/pop combo cereal, really.) Your Pest Band is a Japanese pop punk band, which should guarantee that they're good, but EKC wins this 7" battle. Your Pest Band's first song is kinda boring and the second song is, dare I say it, kind of a half-assed pop punk-ified sloppy

blues boredom crunch. But never mind that; if this record only had one EKC song on it, you should still buy it! Case closed! —Maddy (Repulsion)

YOUTH AVOIDERS: Demo 2010: Cassette

Scrappy, stripped-down hardcore/punk from France. Musically, these guys play a modern incarnation of circa 1980-'81-sounding punk, with simple but surprisingly catchy riffs and shouted vocals. Lyrically, the band are not as exciting, with broken-English lyrics on the usual punk themes. Granted, English is not their primary language, so any faults with the lyrics are easily overlooked, especially considering how rockin' every song on this cassette is. Highly recommended. —Paul J. Comeau (Negative Youth)

ZERO HEROS: Self-titled: 7"

When you create pop punk in the Teengenerate/Ramones vein played like you mean it, can you really go wrong? I mean, this is the sound of a band doing it for fun and it shows. In the evolution of a "punk" band, this is where it begins. Next, they go metal and break up. Do yourself a favor and pick this up now before something like that happens. —Garrett Barnwell (Arkam)

ZERO ZERO: Self-cassette: CD

Fast hardcore from Brazil, done well and with passion. The vocals sound a bit like Rob Pennington (of By The Grace Of God fame) shrieked and screamed over '90s-style Midwest

hardcore guitar. Gang backups come in on the choruses. There's some weird stuff with the lyrics that might be "not cool." For instance, verses about being in a wheelchair and not being able to feel their legs. However, that might be a result of English not being the band's first language, rather than them bullying disabled people. Either way, overall, it's a pretty good release. —Craven Rock (Self-released, zerozeromail@gmail.com, mspace.com/zerozerospace)

ZEROS, THE: "Main Street Brat" b/w "Handgrenade Heart": 7"

My joke is that "The Zeros are one of East L.A.'s first punk bands... really south... Chula Vista south." The joke's not very funny, but The Zeros often get mistaken for an East L.A. band (and their first couple of singles were on L.A.'s Bomp! Records), but they were from a town north of San Diego. Geography aside, there's no denying that this is a legit re-issue of two great songs on the superior, big hole 45 7" format. (It's not a re-issue of a previously available 7". These songs were on full lengths.) I always dig hearing bands on the West Coast in 1977 channeling early punk—think Iggy And The Stooges, Richard Hell-style narratives, and revved-up Chuck Berry. A welcome vinyl addition to first-wave bands getting their due. —Todd (Last Laugh)

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LET'S FACE IT. If you're over thirty, have moved out of your parents' house, and come to realize that "anarchy!" means no bridges, public libraries, streets, or fire departments, idealism's a much harder pill to swallow; especially when you're looking at it through possible liver damage.

BUT THE DUDES IN DAN PADILLA HAVE FOUGHT HARD to remain ethical, moral, and honest well after more vocal members of the DIY punk community have "moved on" to the comfort and status quo they once claimed to despise and swore they'd "burn to the ground." Dan Padilla just wants some public space and the freedom to play what they've created... and the cops can still go fuck themselves.

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"There's an
ambiguity there,
but not vagueness.
It keeps the reader
wondering."

—Katie Dunn

ABORT #23

AARDVARK, THE #2, \$1.00
(but add postage), 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",
copied, 17 pages

A well-written zine, *The Aardvark* is, to use their subtitle, "Celebrating words on paper." The first essay is a reflection of Joseph Campbell juxtaposed with the author's dissatisfaction of his employment at a bookstore. *The Aardvark* is an attempt by the author to "follow his bliss," or to explore his relationship with books. The essays within certainly reflect this goal with one noteworthy and well researched endeavor about libraries and the change from being book-oriented to being a computer-oriented place. I read many of the articles that he cited in the article and came to a similar conclusion. *The Aardvark* packs five articles into its seventeen pages and mixes in a few pages of zine reviews. It's a thought-provoking zine with a clean layout and worth your time. —Steve Hart (Red Roach Press, PO Box 771, College Park, MD 20740).

ABORT! #23, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",
copied, color cover, 56 pgs.

A science fiction edition of Jonathan Spies' short story anthology zine. He's got a preoccupation with bones, and that's pretty cool. Best line is probably, "The silence had taken him by surprise, lurching into his life like a hundred-story robot." I'm a big fan of science fiction and old science fiction magazines, so in my head I'm thinking, "*Galaxy Magazine*, fuck yeah!" The first story, "The Porch," by Keith Rosson is my favorite. The language is sparse, specific, and minute. There's an ambiguity there, but not vagueness. It keeps the reader wondering. —Katie Dunne (Jonathan Spies, 45 E 7th St. #106, NY, NY 10003)

ASSUMING SIZE, \$2,
4 1/4" x 5 1/2", copied, 20 pgs.
A poetry chapbook featuring four writers. The cover art is really cool but the printing job takes away from it. Otherwise, the presentation

is crisp: cream cover with machine sewn white thread for binding. The first collection of poems appears to be a list of personal affirmations. Second collection includes a poem about Facebook (?). I liked "Arthur danto" because the all caps made it feel like, "Look at this absolute bullshit of a life that academia is!" until the coda about "Tom" Pynchon made it too self aware, too jarring. I repeat: this is a poetry chapbook published in 2010. —Katie Dunne (monsterhousepress.tumblr.com)

BEAT MOTEL #10, \$4, offset,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 60 pgs.

Good-natured English punk zine with lots of tiny type that says cool stuff like "Top lads go nuts, in an ordered way" and "Drive to Norwich was pretty swish and Abbi and Mike had turned their lounge into a boudoir of comfort for us, dreams!" The theme for this issue is "success," so contributors take turns defining it. As punks, they skew more towards "doing what I like" as opposed to "Corvettes." The coolest band name covered is Mum Locked In Castle. Beyond that, you'll find the standard reviews, scene reports and...get ready for it...fart facts! I was laughing at this zine on the train while this mouthbreathing jock sat next to me, trying to read over my shoulder. I kept twisting away from him so he couldn't look, because fun like this is for us punks, not the meatheads. —CT Terry (Beat Motel, PO Box 773, Ipswich, Ip1 9FT, UK, beatmotel.co.uk)

BLACK OKOYE! #1,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 18 pgs.
This is a zine full of poetic prose that's incomprehensible, except for the three-part piece called "Colostomy," where he waxes philosophical about a friend in high school who was "born without an ass" and cursed with a colostomy bag. I liked that one. —Craven Rock (Blue Okoye, 973 Crescent St. #2, Brooklyn, NY 11208, okehi@hotmail.com)

CHACHI FRIJOLES #1,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 24 pgs.
Upon a sloppy-as-hell layout of text cut and pasted over newspaper randomness is a rewarding zine by a young fellow named Bizzy Mike. It was slow starting due to a (by nature) dull tour diary, but it shows potential with some short pieces on friendship, religion (hating it), and the cruel irony of a woodshop accident in high school. This review is irrelevant because the author provides no contact info. —Craven Rock (no address)

COMETBUS #54, \$4,
5 1/2" x 8", printed, 97 pgs.
With what's seemed like a surge in issues over the past few years, this one is the story of Aaron joining Green Day on tour for the first time in years—but instead of a small DIY tour, it's two weeks spanning arenas across Asia. Interspersed between checking out new countries are anecdotes about "way back when," which gives insight to Aaron as well as the rest of the band. Given his history of writing about how "the coolest punk events are the ones no one else knows about," he's actually got a fair and balanced attitude about the whole thing, which adds even more layers to an already deep zine. Out of every issue I've read recently, this is probably my favorite. —Joe Evans III (Aaron Cometbus, no contact info given)

EVERYTHING SEA DREAM #1,
\$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied,
color cover, 36 pgs.
"Music supposedly inspired by UFOs used by Soviets to teach English to Ukrainians." This is a really strange read. I loved it. It starts off with an article about using conch shells for clairaudience. The practice is kind of like sensory deprivation which creates this environment where you can auditorily hallucinate. Really weird stuff. There are some other reprinted sci-fi/UFO articles from exploitation magazines like *The Examiner* or *The Inquirer*, and

some stories about mysterious lights in the woods that are either fiction or by someone who is mentally ill. The layout is strange too, e.g. the front cover is the back page. I'm really glad I was sent this zine, but I would never pay \$5 for xeroxed black and white pages. —Katie Dunne (Mark Billings, 1012 Central Ave. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102, gaitpublishing.com)

FOSSIL, THE #1, \$2 or trade,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 34 pgs.
I have no idea how a zine from Ireland, a first issue at that, not relating at all to punk music, ended up getting distro'd at a punk show in Long Beach, CA but it did. Boy am I glad because this zine is just what I needed. It's simple and straightforward, full of honesty, relevance, and hope. The drawings which accompanied the pieces on female genital mutilation, the situation in the Gaza Strip, and the advantages of walking are great. While this is definitely being written from a feminist perspective, it's in no way demonizing or alienating, which is both encouraging and refreshing. Also included in this zine are comics, poems, and a reminder of what makes zines such a beautiful release for the things that can't be bottled. —Rene Navarro (fossilezine@gmail.com)

FUN, FUN, FUN... SKATEZINE
#6, \$?, 4 1/4" x 5 1/2", photocopied,
24 pgs.
Fun, Fun, Fun... is a cool little pocket-sized zine straight outta Mississippi. Issue #6 is brimming over with cool photos, music reviews, rants, and enthusiasm. This totally reminds me of all the cool little skate zines from the '80s, which makes sense since the zine's creator notes as much in the credits. If skateboard zines are your thing, grab this infectious little puppy. Reading it totally made me want to go skate a ditch or something. —Garrett Barnwell (Fun, Fun, Fun..., 3880 Carroll Dr., Horn Lake, MS 38637)

GAY HORSE #1, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 20 pgs. I bought this because I wanted to know about gay horses, but there are no references to said animals outside the title. So what's this all about? Lists, comparisons, poetry, a parent interview, photography, and an attack on Axe products. This is all done by one person who chose to not write down her (I think) name anywhere, which is cool, and makes for a very personal glimpse into the writer's world. It's also hand written, which is great, and the author even offers to send you copies of recommended zines if you have trouble locating them yourself. My only complaint consists of her "good day" and "mellow day" playlists, both of which

exchange. That's how amazing it is. Other questions include, "Can you tell me what is so special about Israel?" and (I'm condensing the question here) "Is Ramses buried in an abandoned stadium named the Memphis Pyramid?" John also writes about the characters who call the library day after day (or hour after hour), and he's not a dick about it. About half of the zine is devoted to phone conversations between him and a man who appears to have some combination of physical and mental illness, and John manages to pull off a description of their conversations that's both hilarious and sympathetic. I know most people don't bother to buy zines anymore, but you really should send

NIGHT OF THE FANDOM #1, 7" x 8 1/2", 52 pgs.

A zine born from the New Brunswick area punk scene that features in-depth, interesting interviews with The Ergs! and Hunchback, plus a long write-up of the latest album from The Measure (SA). Otherwise, there's something different on almost every page: a connect the dots, excerpts from panel discussions on riot grrrl and experimental libraries, a well-drawn and disturbing comic about a woman's encounter with a kid she used to babysit, and various forms of music geeking. There's a lot of cooks, but they aren't spoiling the soup. Everything in here is interesting. *Night of the Fandom* is a collaborative effort, a testament to the community

mentioned discusses "the influence of technology on human behavior and relationships." Pretty deep stuff, with Star Trek and Star Wars thrown in for good measure. —Rene Navarro (nostrozone.wordpress.com)

PSIONIC PLASTIC JOY #16, tabloid size, newsprint, \$2.00 (U.S.), \$3.00 (World), 12 pgs.

I've received this paper to review twice before and, if anything, it's pretty consistently inconsistent. The first time, it was a little too out there for me. The second time, it was the perfect amount of esoteric fringe stuff mixed with relevant radical thought. This time, it's even more mixed-up. The editor, Jason Rodgers, is an interesting writer and

"Who decides the length of time between a yellow and red light, a vague question about getting sexual favors from young girls in Yugoslavia, and (by the same customer) a similarly confusing question about Ralph Waldo Emerson."

—Maddy Tight Pants
GHOSTS OF READY REFERENCE #4

would have made it a "bad day" for me. As far as Axe hygiene products, I have no recollection of how that spray can came into my possession, but if your room smells like weed and gym clothes, it's the way to go. Just spray that shit, even if this person claims it leads to "energetic use of the term 'faggot,' drunken brawls (repressed homosexuality), lighthearted references to rape," etc. —Rene Navarro (natbizzle@gmail.com)

GHOSTS OF READY REFERENCE #4, \$2, 4 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 54 pgs.

This is the best zine I've read in over a year, easily. I like this so much that I plan on ordering ten copies to give out to my friends! When's the last time I could say that about a zine? It's been a long time. This zine is written by a guy named John who works as a reference librarian, and the entire thing (other than a brief and thoughtful intro and conclusion) is just conversations he's had with various customers asking reference questions so bizarre that it makes me wish I was a reference librarian. Like a question about who decides the length of time between a yellow and red light and a vague question about getting sexual favors from young girls in Yugoslavia and (by the same customer) a similarly confusing question about Ralph Waldo Emerson. I'm not even going to give away the rest of this

two bucks to the address below and get yourself a copy of this. This is what a zine should be. —Maddy Tight Pants (R. John Xerxes, 10 Inca Lane #2, SF, CA 94115)

LUCINDA CONSOLE'S DOG DAYS: EUROPEAN TOUR DIARY 2010, £1.50, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 31 pgs.

I have to say right off the bat that I am a sucker for a good tour journal and this is just that. The zine documents one Mr. Hamish Adams experiences while on a European tour with his band Bangers. Kind of a glaring omission of sorts—I had to dig a bit through the diary to figure out exactly what band he was touring with. Minor quibble though, since, as I mentioned, it's a pretty well done zine. You get a map with the tour stops noted and plenty of well-written commentary that is alternately funny, scary, sad, and crazy. If tour diaries are your thing, grab this. I always like noting that no matter how close the band, by the end of a tour they are all literally ready to kill each other. As an aside, I must note that Adams does seem to have a worrisome penchant for masturbating in some pretty weird places. I'll just leave it at that! —Garrett Barnwell (Hamish Adams, Eastgate Barn, Landreyne, Coats Green, Cornwall, PL15 7LZ, UK)

that it came from, and after reading it, I feel like I understand this corner of the scene's values and aesthetics. Oh, and they also talk to Bob Camp from Ren and Stimpy. Cool! —CT Terry (Lovecraft Press, 1316 Windsor Rd., Princeton Junction, NJ 08550)

NO MORE COFFEE #3, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 28 pgs.

This is a really interesting collection of short stories. Each one possesses a kind of dark cynicism and also a perverse spiritualism. The intense imagery and the careful, deliberate pacing are kind of moving, honestly. I would love to read more issues of this zine. —Katie Dunne (Ben Spies, 1806 Winnie St., Galveston, TX 77550, nomorecoffeezine@gmail.com)

NOSTROMO #1, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 17 pgs.

Is it ironic that a zine made about sci-fi was made "with only an old metal typewriter and a dozen black ink pens"? No, it's not. Get yourself a copy to understand why. Though it's a bit on the short side, there's no filler. Each page is either all text or art, and I like that. The column I found most interesting focuses on a subject I've found myself discussing with my friends recently, which is that we were the last "real" generation—at least, almost. I didn't have a computer or cell phone until I was nineteen, and my computer had no internet. The column I just

thinker, who I can always appreciate reading. He excels in here with his Luddite anti-internet article and a leftist critique of *Harlan County U.S.A.*, which is probably the most important film ever made. Next, he contradicts his article about why print is crucial by printing two poorly executed articles that will leave readers scratching their heads. Each of these articles assumes way too much of the reader. For instance, there's a whole newspaper-sized page dedicated to something called Art Detox, which made no sense to me because I have no idea what that is. The author felt no inclination to tell me, either. This is followed by an incoherent, satirical piece about some artist guy named Dash Snow who, apparently, died. I couldn't figure out whether the dead fucker was real, a mockery of someone real, or entirely fabrication. It's a bit ironic to print an article about boycotting the internet and then forcing your reader to google the subject matter of the rest of the articles you print (I didn't). These seriously frustrating excuses for journalism are followed by more bad writing. However, this was of the so-bad-it's-good variety of paranoid conspiracy theory, which I enjoy in small doses. I had fun reading aloud to my friends the pieces about how there were once giants (or Nephilim) that ran the world who looked like lizards and

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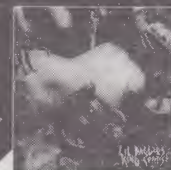
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bred evil into to people by fucking them when they weren't supposed to (or something like that). This sort of wingnuttery, is immediately followed by an essay written by the always thought-provoking John Zerzan. All of this is laid out on cut 'n' paste newsprint and interspersed with some wacky poetry. *P/P/J* is a fun mish-mash of underground thought—some of it frustratingly bad, some of it hilariously bad, a lot of it pretty damn astute. —Craven Rock (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 8512, Albany, NY 12208)

RAD DAD #18, \$3 ppd., 5 1/2" x 8", offset, 40 pgs. In 1990, famed female hip hop mavens Salt-n-Pepa decreed that we "talk about sex, baby" and an entire nation listened. Some two decades later, the writers featured in *Rad Dad* remain true to the original bold initiative set forth by that legendary rap duo and have presented an engaging collection of deeply personal essays and interviews, mostly on the topic of sex and how it affects relationships and parenting. I especially enjoyed Clayton Dewey's piece on his marriage gradually moving into an open relationship and Dani Burlison's essay on her anxiety over her teenage daughter becoming sexually active. Everything in this zine comes off as very honest. It's also funny and well written, to boot. Salt-

n-Pepa would be very proud. —Andy Conway (Microcosm Publishing, microcosmpublishing.com)

SELF AWARE #7, \$3 ppd., 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 32 pgs. Nice half-sized zine from Joshua, who also runs a label with the same name. You get interviews with Mouthbreather, Worn In Red, Everyone Everywhere, and Chuck from Tiny Engines / Bear Trap PR. Then there's an article on Rad Fest, which offers three different perspectives that are interesting in their varying views. There's also, a tour diary from Band Name and it's rounded off with some columns and record reviews. Support your music zines! —M.Avrq (selfawarerecords.com)

SHOGANAI, \$3.50, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 36 pgs. *Shoganoi* is the story of a young, punk American working as a teacher in Japan for a less-than-reputable commercial university. The stories are funny, depressing, upsetting, and inspiring. The author gives the explanation that the only reason he's anywhere, and especially Japan, is to experience what life has to offer. "Why Not?" is the answer for "Why Japan?" There's at once a passive, objective view of the events, but, at the same time, an idealistic, naïve hyperbole: almost every story/chapter included something along the lines of, "So and so was the most influential

person I ever met," "One of the warmest instances of human contact in my life," "This was the single most memorable student experience," etc. This hyperbole appears to come from the author's genuine sense of gratitude and amazement with the world around him. The stark layout makes it a fairly dense read, as far as zines go: It's thirty-six pages and eight chapters of text only. But the bottom line is that it's an interesting story and an interesting point of view. —Katie Dunne (Servo Jeffers, 702 Vine, DC, IA 50063, servofromtheinternet.com)

TNS RECORDS FREE FANZINE #9, free, 5" x 8 1/4", copied, 22 pgs. More updates on the ska and punk scene in the U.K. A lot of information about TNS Records bands like Bootscraper, Eastfield, Beatsteaks, and Pour Habit and some well-written record reviews. —Craven Rock (thatsnotskanking@hotmail.com)

TOM TOM MAGAZINE #4, \$6.00 11" x 8 1/2", printed, 54 pages. All bands are only as good as their drummers, so the maxim says, and I don't disagree. All of my favorite bands are anchored by powerful drummers. I often say that punk rock needs drummers to take more of a lead role. I think that it's time that punk rock branched out percussively—

while the Melvins and Kylesa are using two drummers, with much success—I'd like to see even a bigger battery of percussion. Because of this, I was absolutely thrilled to read *Tom Tom Magazine*, a magazine about female drummers. I often read drum magazines because, although I'm a guitar player, I really wish I could play drums. That said, most drum magazines suck and feature drummers who I can't stand, who don't have a personality or play bad, boring music. *Tom Tom Magazine* has everything that I'm looking for—drummers that play indie rock, punk rock, world beat, movie score percussionists, Indian tabla players, avant turntablists, moms that drum, drummers who paint—*Tom Tom Magazine* has it all. Issue four has a great article on a group of female drummers in Rwanda, which is absolutely riveting, along with interviews and smaller pieces on female drummers from all genres. Expertly laid out, with great photos and supremely written articles, I've become a huge fan and will subscribe immediately. I can't say enough about how cool the concept and execution of this magazine is—a magazine that pushes music forward instead of rehashing nostalgia. —Steve Hart (301 Bedford Ave. PMB #85, Brooklyn, NY 11211)



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alt.punk

By Lavinia Ludlow 202 pgs.

alt.punk is a story of a hypochondriac grocery store manager, Hazel, who is trapped in a miserable relationship. Her boyfriend is a lazy, messy pig who can barely leave the couch to get another jar of peanut butter. The protagonist finally gets the courage to leave the hair-depositing boyfriend and jumps into another relationship with a singer in a punk rock band. And, of course, the singer has to be the biggest junky; a sex-addicted, self-absorbed pig who is barely conscious of his surroundings. His brother is the main antagonist in the story, constantly needling Hazel for a variety of sins. He is the quintessential punk rock know-it-all, questioning her punk rock credentials at every opportunity.

Writing a novel about punk rock can be difficult because of the exclusionary aspects that are often found within punk scenes. For instance, the tales of a Warped Tour type of band wacked out of their minds on cocaine is very different from the punk rock scene that I know. Also, some of the band names mentioned in the book seemed to be more of a laundry list of hip, "old-school" punk bands. However, while I found myself thinking this, the antagonist says something very similar and I felt like an asshole questioning the bands being mentioned.

alt.punk is an extremely well-written and crafted book that is peppered with engaging dialogue. I looked forward to every new chapter in the book because of the writing style. Ludlow makes sure each chapter started with something clever, often funny, but always interesting. Because of this, the reading is quick, even if the abuse heaped upon Hazel can be too much at times. Thankfully, the author gives Hazel a strong voice and a glimmer of hope at the end. —Steve Hart (Casperian Books, PO Box 161026, Sacramento, CA 95816-1026)

Beautiful on the Outside, Rich on the Inside

By Hunter S. Douglas III, 300 pgs.

Based on a prank that baits women (and some men without shirts) on Craigslist, imagine the most douchey rich dude posting a personal—yachts, polo, personal assistant typing the posting, explicitly demanding a woman who'll aspire to be his personal accessory and whim-handler—and then read the women's collected responses from all over the world for the better part of 298 pages.... It's exhausting.

What this book needs is to become fifty pages and be transformed into one hell of a funny zine, along the line of Rich Mackin's *Books of Letters*. It does have some high points. But, as it is—a grinding, repeated set of reactions from feminist rage, to acquiescence, to "thanks for the laugh," to people suggesting that he collect the responses to make a book, to a lot of people wondering why they're wasting their time on Craigslist instead of looking for jobs, to thanking Hunter that he doesn't seem like a creepy rapist—made it really hard to get through.

As it stands, this book reinforces what I don't like about the internet itself: It's barely edited, filled with repetition, and woefully lacking in much of what gives me joy and as a human being... and that's why I compulsively read books instead of glowing screens. Fun idea, but executed in the wrong format. —Todd (Chamber Of Cobras)

Bride of the Reaper

By Charles Romalotti, 204 pgs.

Salad Days author Charles Romalotti returns with *Bride of the Reaper*, a gory tale set in the punk rock scene of 1985. The book opens with a graphically violent scene set during the Civil War and the bloodshed doesn't let up as it goes on. I don't know about you, but I like anything involving a haunted house (except for real haunted houses, of which I am petrified) and *Bride of the Reaper* is centered around one. This book also includes a literary cameo by the Dead Kennedys, something that not too many other horror novels out there can boast (pretty sure HP Lovecraft was more of a Black Flag guy). Fans of punk rock and horror will like this. Wait, I guess I just mean that fans of the Misfits will like this. Yeah, that's it. —Andy Conway (Layman Books, laymanbooks.com)

Double Nickels on the Dime

By Michael T. Fournier

California fusion-punk trio Minutemen's double album *Double Nickels on the Dime* personified the mid-1980s boom of eccentric punk that set the groundwork for indie and alternative rock.

Minutemen's ninety-second blasts shoehorn in searing funk and skronking jazz. D. Boon bellows over his razor-sharp guitar, Mike Watt's slap bass lopes along, and George Hurley's skittering drums tape it all together and roll it down the hill.

At first, Minutemen and the forty-five-song *Double Nickels* are impenetrable, like the idiom of three guys who have been stuck in an elevator for a year. But, after a listener immerses themselves in Minutemen's music, they are rewarded with a unique perspective.

Professor and music writer Michael T. Fournier cracks this Rosetta Stone, providing song-by-song details from the surviving Minutemen Watt and Hurley, their contemporaries, and Fournier's fellow fans.

Fournier's book is most helpful as a reference. Going cover-to-cover, a reader is quickly lost unless they are already familiar with each song. It makes more sense to flip to the entry on a favorite track for more information.

The typical entry is five hundred words, beginning with a description of the music—a necessity on an album that blusters from funk to punk to tape noise to bastardized classic rock to meditative fingerpicking. Then there's discussion of the lyrics, often with quotes from Watt about the song's inside references, followed by some information on recording and instrumentation.

Fournier's book adds accessibility to a daunting chunk of music. It is a great help for the casual listener who wants a deeper understanding of this mysterious record and also acts as a useful companion for the established fan who wants to see one of the most important albums of the '80s in a new light. —CT Terry (Continuum's 33 1/3 series)

Hüsker Dü: The Story of the Noise-Pop Pioneers Who Launched Modern Rock

By Andrew Earles, 287 pgs.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. I am a big fan of band biographies. I guess it comes with being an encyclopedic nerd about stuff that I like. The only thing better than getting to read a book about one of my favorite bands is to read one about a band that I love that I don't already know the whole story. Hüsker Dü definitely fits that bill.

Sure, I know the basic story. Band starts in Minnesota in the late '70s, has an amazing work ethic in songwriting and touring, resulting in being signed to SST. They continue to record and tour like crazy, get signed to a major label, but by the end of the '80s have dissolved and have been feuding bitterly ever since.... That's pretty much it, right?

Wrong. There is so much more to the Hüsker Dü story and Andrew Earles digs deep to get it. Right off the bat, I found that I really enjoyed his writing style. His approach to the band bio format is refreshing. The story moves along quickly, speaking with many key players in the band's history. Both Grant Hart and Greg Norton participated, but Bob Mould declined, due to his own pending autobiography. Although Earles does his best to represent Mould through past interviews and statements, the book can't help but lean to the Hart point of view. Perhaps when Mould's book comes along, it will even the story out as a companion piece.

The story is engaging on its own, but I felt a bit distracted when it veered off into the story of Reflex Records. I understand that starting their own label was a very important part of their (and American punk rock) history, but it really breaks the stride of the band's story about a third of the way through the book.

Really, it's a small price to pay, to learn so much about such an important, yet overlooked, band. One can only hope that one day everyone

involved can solve their differences and get those classic releases remixed and mastered the way they should be. Pick this up and get a great read. —Ty Stranglehold (Voyageur Press)

Hüsker Dü: The Story of the Noise-Pop Pioneers Who Launched Modern Rock

By Andrew Earles, 287 pgs.

Let me preface this review with this: I absolutely love Hüsker Dü. If you're going to author a book about them, you better not fuck it up, because people will take offense. This being said, the book was a struggle to get through and the author really fucked this up. While it has some interesting stories and anecdotes about the band, the scene in Minneapolis from which they came from, and sometimes exhausting analysis of their records, it reads like the first draft of a school book report in desperate need of an instructor's red pen to make necessary corrections to make it worthwhile.

To any young writers out there with aspirations of writing a book, please, *please* hire a good editor. Had the author hired an editor, or, hell, had he gotten an honest friend to simply read a pre-press copy, many of the shortcomings of this book could have been avoided. Making your way through it, you'll start to notice topics that have already been discussed

changed. The scams are a bit dated, but as Erick, aka Iggy, says in the introduction to this book, it's not so much about scamming people, the scam is about figuring out how to live free. Throughout, you get first-person accounts of squatting, hitchhiking, train hopping, and playing punk shows, often in a not-too-receptive environment.

The stories of squatting and walking around various parts of Florida are interesting at first, but, after a while, they get tedious and the writing tends to get a little sappy. I do think Erick is a good writer when he's telling it like it is, but when he over-idealizes things, his writing suffers. (Just read the story about going to jail in issue #2. Nothing cool or fun about being locked up.) But when he writes about Florida history, or when he writes about living in San Francisco, as in issue #4, then he's at the top of his game. He definitely has a grasp for political writing and he writes about it in a very human way that anyone can relate to.

Treat this like a compilation CD. Instead of reading it like a regular book, read an issue then put it away for a while. Pick it up a while later, read another issue, and so forth. You'll get more out of it that way. Will there be a collection of later issues of *Scam*? —M.Avr (Microcosm, 222 S. Rogers St, Bloomington, IN 47404, microcosmpublishing.com)

“Man, I really could use a copy of that new Steve Adamyk Band record... oh, and also a cream puff.”

—Andy Conway, *Zinester's Guide to NYC*

in earlier chapters being brought up over and over again, sometimes in a contradictory manner.

In the first fifty pages alone, the supposed rivalry with fellow Minneapolis band The Replacements is mentioned time and time again—sometimes saying a rivalry *does* exist, and then later saying that it never was a rivalry at all, only to have it brought up again a few chapters later. The book mentions multiple times that the band Loud Fast Rules later became known as Soul Asylum. I don't need to be reminded of this every time their name is mentioned. The same redundancy applies when referencing many of the contributors to this story. At times, it feels like each chapter was written as its own story, reintroducing the people quoted throughout the book over and over again.

A mind-numbingly boring part of the book comes with the chapter that extensively covers every band and record released on the band's own Reflex records in great detail. While Reflex Records was certainly an important part of the progression of Hüsker Dü, this whole chapter seems like filler. There is little to no explanation of the relation of these bands to the Hüskers, and the chapter suddenly ends by stating, “the Hüskers were way too busy” and thus the label ended, “with a whimper.” I don't believe that it's an integral part of the legacy of Hüsker Dü to inform the reader what semi-obscure band Otto's Chemical Lounge were up to just because they released a record on Reflex. These are just a few examples of the types of filler that plague this book from start to finish.

While the writing style and sheer repetition of the author grows to be more and more frustrating the further you get into the book, I do have to say that there is plenty of great information here if you have the patience to trudge through it all. There are some great full color photos and handbill reproductions, many of which had not been previously published. The appendix of the book is painstakingly thorough. If you're a huge fan and celebrate the band's entire catalog, you'll most likely find something worthwhile within these pages. If you are a casual fan or one who might be annoyed by a lack of fluid storytelling, I would probably avoid picking this up. —Mark Twistworthy (Voyageur Press, voyageurpress.com)

Scam: The First Four Issues

By Erick Lyle

Compiled in one easy-to-manage format, you get 288 pages of, as the title states, the first four issues of *Scam* zine. First issue came out in 1991. Reading it now, twenty years later, it's obviously dated in some sections, but a good illustration of what the punk scene and some of the world was like. America is still in Iraq is the one thing that hasn't really

Spiraling Pearls, The

By Jean Paul L. Garnier, 44 pgs.

The Spiraling Pearls is a collection of poems from author and musician Jean Paul L. Garnier. Enthusiastically receiving my package of things to review, I opened to the contents page in a gym that is not very well lit and began reading. However, the titles for the poetry are in lower case letters and there isn't a number assigned to them, so the titles themselves read as poetry. “coldness/story of the hand/mark of the devil/damn the modern times/in his image/put there by the devil.” At first I thought, what is this about? Until I noticed the page was entitled, “Contents.” I felt pretty dumb at first until I remembered my poetry professor stating that poets should try to write evocative titles.

I find that poetry that is used to reflect modern society is often powerful and this is where I find Garnier's poetry to be compelling. In the poem, “Army of Meat,” he deconstructs the meat industry and our complacency within. “...to the tune of flavor/selfish theft/they demand retribution/an army of meat...” The mechanics of the poem, with tight, terse lines, brought an immediacy to the poem and reminded me of the song, “Grass So Green,” by the San Francisco band, A State Of Mind, which was sung from an animal's perspective.

“Money to Play With” is another striking poem that critiques the relationship between strippers and their patrons. “...at lunch have their balls stepped on by the underclass/at home, undersexed wives/see television...” Garnier points out the hypocrisy of a man looking for absolution from the Church: “...transactions are sexualized/a few words in church/washed them clear of this...”

The Spiraling Pearls is a collection of unpretentious free prose written by an author who seems to have taken his time to look within his own thoughts and at the world around him, and used his poems as a small recreation of his observations. —Steve Hart (Hipster Death Press, hipsterdeath.com)

You Can't Win

By Jack Black, 279 pgs.

Jack Black's memoir, *You Can't Win*, is an exciting story of a life of crime in late 19th century America. But there's something else in it, something beyond that. It's deeply personal but not in an effusive, hyperbolic way. It's straightforward and honest. Black's cards are laid out on the table without sentimentality. His style of writing is often compared to Bukowski, but, again, the similarities go further. They both share an innocence in the face of—and in spite of—the grotesque, cruel, and outrageous world around

By A Thread

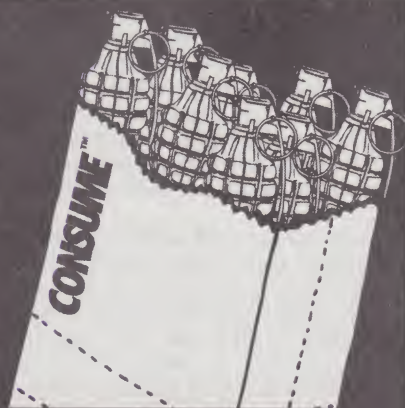
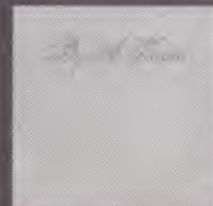
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them. Though he recounts stories of terrible abuse in prison and it is hinted that his disappearance in 1932 was the result of suicide, he seems to be eternally unjaded. If he were to tell you in the afterlife the story of tying weights to his feet and jumping in the New York Harbor, he'd be just as evenhanded and forthright as he would be explaining to you how to case a neighborhood or who to go to when trying to get rid of stolen valuables.

It's fascinating to learn the ins and outs of life as a criminal during the early days of America, doubly so because Black is haplessly stumbling into his life along with us. As a sixteen year old he learns how abusive and unconcerned the justice system is when he's falsely arrested and swept into the jail without any chance to defend himself.

But times like this served his education well. He learns quickly because he's a perceptive student. He tells us, "Whatever knowledge I have was gleaned by looking and listening, and it is much more accurate than any I could have got by asking impertinent and close-up questions. Your best friend would give you a surly answer if you were to ask him the time of day an hour after his watch had been stolen."

Actions, of course, are much more powerful than words, and his attitude applies not just to the people around him but his own innate sense of loyalty and square-ness. The "wrong" people (as he calls the marginal people: thieves and bums) may not be considered honorable, but their code of loyalty is deeply impressive to him. The justice system, police officers, judges—the "right" people—are corrupt and jaded. He's falsely arrested and dismissed without any consideration multiple times. He takes it in stride because that's what has been dealt to him. The "wrong" people are the first to show him appreciation and to generously give when they could easily take advantage of a young naïve kid.

In telling the story of one of his many escapes from the law he writes,



Trash Humpers: DVD

Enter the Void: DVD

For the most transgressive double-feature of the year, I caught the new Harmony Korine and Gaspar Noe films back-to-back last year (now both are on DVD). I didn't expect each film's hopeful enthusiasm for innocent youth.

Trash Humpers can be billed as Korine's return to his early territory of *Gummo*... Well, Harmony has always pushed the limits, breaking down the conventions of film plots and styles, reaching the high expectations of Euro art yet hitting home for all of us who grew up in the '80s in mid-America suburbia with *Swamp Thing* as our biggest life coach. *Humpers* reaches the insane levels of *Gummo* but is more disjunctive with less plot and more pure moments, which turned some viewers off, at least the ones who split early. But I loved it, a film purely in the avant gutter. Every frame was put together beautifully, a photography book in motion, with a perfect looking VHS (on EP mode) format. There is a great traveling gallery show possible alongside the movie. The film documents the minutes and hours of four old people as they hump trash and mess things up around town freaking out onlookers, with a deeper life metaphor in the last few scenes that's great. Dealing with the heaviness of adult responsibility and desperate for the teenaged carelessness in old age, it becomes life affirming.

"I will not say there is honor among thieves, but I maintain that the thieves I knew had something that served as a good substitute for honor. On a propitious night he cut the window bars. I was too weak to pull myself up to the window, and he had to reach in, lift me bodily, and drop me on the ground outside." Despite his cut and dry language, there are moments like this, and also in his discussion of his reformation, which are deeply moving. *You Can't Win* is an inspiring read, a book to shore up against the constant embattlement of cynicism and jadedness. —Katie Dunne (AK Press, PO Box 40682, SF, CA)

Zinester's Guide to NYC

By Ayun Halliday, 256 pgs.

I think I just found my new "Fun Bible" for New York City (which means I can now "fun-burn" my old "Fun Bible"). This book serves as something of a punk rock Zagat guide, with listings for great places to eat, see shows, buy records, get drunk, and do other "zinester" activities through out New York City. On second thought, comparing this to a mere Zagat guide sells *Zinester's Guide to NYC* short because it's actually really fun to read. It's loaded with cool illustrations and extra-comprehensive summaries for each entry, leaving no stone in NYC unturned, which is no small feat. Living in New Jersey, I often make trips out to NYC and find myself thinking, "Man, I really could use a copy of that new Steve Adamyk Band record... oh, and also a cream puff. If only I knew where to go." I now have a tremendously useful resource. Each time I thumbed through, I found multiple ideas for new activities to try out next time I spend a day in the Big Apple. Highly recommended. —Andy Conway (Microcosm Publishing, Microcosmpublishing.com)



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Whenever you can, follow *Humpers* up with *Enter the Void*, Noe's explosion of a film about the existential circle of life. Following a brother and sister through drugged happiness, childhood tragedy, and some baaaaad choices, Noe reaches Spielberg levels of CGI to portray the film from inside the main character's head, complete with eye blinks, before moving the audience on to smooth, endless floating over the characters and luscious Tokyo. It's excessive but not overdone, with incredible colors and movement. You actually sit there and say, "How the hell was this filmed?" It's probably too straight-forward and narrative for a pure avant-garde crowd but drug lovers and reincarnationists will be ecstatic throughout; strong performances push the limits, and Noe's frenetic film work bringing realism to the characters. Noe's fascination with the incredible string of life culminates in a porn version of the last twenty minutes of *2001*, in a way. Yes, lots of the crowd guessed where the plot was going. But if people want to see something truly visceral, tackling the complexities of life and youth, this pops the ceiling. —Speedway Randy (trashhumpers.com, ifcfilms.com/films/enter-the-void)

Exit through the Gift Shop: DVD

Legendary street artist Banksy's film *Exit through the Gift Shop* is now on DVD, a great roller coaster ride that is not only an entertaining mystery but a pinpoint observation on today's art world. The film explores the underground street art scene and its anonymity, then segues into the notions of art vs. vandalism, appreciation vs. random collection, and spontaneity vs. calculated hype.

The documentary is made by a talented street artist that goes by the name Banksy. No one knows who he is, successfully staying anonymous for years now. People care about who he is because his art has the great combination of being both beautiful and something that makes a statement. The fact he is still unknown after being successful at putting art up around the world—and also selling it on occasion at the luxurious Sotheby's—just pumps up the mystique.

Street art as a subject is deceptive. It's packed with power, but many dismiss it. It's layered with the connotation: well that's nice and pretty, but I could have done that. But you have to remember, you *didn't* do it. And that's a big thing. An even bigger thing is— why *don't* you do it? Take a stand, mark a wall, be a pirate—but have something to say.

Exit covers the best street artists because it's really a documentary about this guy Thierry, who is a sort of maniac with a video camera. He got obsessed on his cousin, the artist Space Invader, then on Shepard Fairey (Andre the Giant Has a Posse), before being lucky enough to become Banksy's Dad-with-a-camera, following him around the world.

“It’s probably too straight-forward and narrative for a pure avant-garde crowd but drug lovers and reincarnationists will be ecstatic throughout.”

—Speedway Randy, *Enter the Void*

Thierry’s hours and hours (probably adding up to literal years) of footage makes *Exit* not only fun but important. When Thierry fails to make his own art documentary out of the footage, Banksy steps in with a team and makes the film instead, focusing on the art scene but also on Thierry, who careens out of control and becomes an artist on steroids nicknamed Mr. Brainwash.

Banksy’s work, as is the case with most street art, makes the police and government very mad. If not for the simple case of vandalism, then for the very specific social and political criticism the art has. Many times, it’s just art on a wall. At its best, it makes a strong statement. My favorite art is also existential, making you notice things you might miss in life. With the best artists, it’s all these things.

Then it gets confusing—once Banksy’s art started selling for huge amounts of money, the establishment started caring. If he tags a wall, it’s either stolen—the wall is stolen—or the owner carefully covers it with Plexiglas or something to preserve it. And if the art was intended to make a statement, how is the statement changed when it becomes an object for sale?

I think the film really says all the things we want to hear about art—it’s great and should be free—and people with money might be fucking it all up. But then, who takes the money that’s spent? It’s complex.

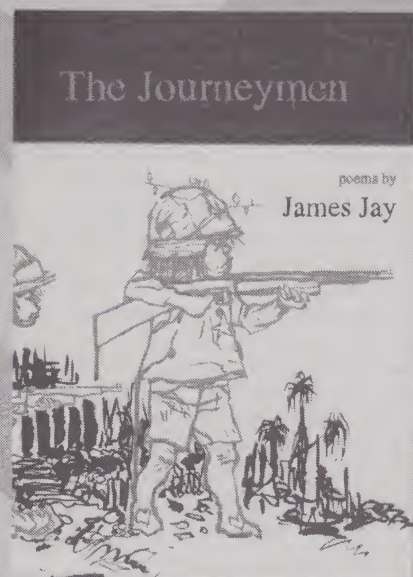
Mr. Brainwash is such a perfect villain that it’s hard to believe it’s not all a master plan by Banksy to comment on the art world, with Thierry being Tony Clifton to Banksy’s Andy Kaufman. That said, Thierry does seem crazy and out of control on his own. *Earth is a fucking strange place.*

Extras: “More brainwashing” is more charming footage of Thierry that was cut out of the film and is interesting but not vital. The supposed documentary that Thierry was making, *Life Remote Control*, that no one seems to think was ever made, is on the extras (but only fourteen minutes worth). It feels like more outtakes, but it’s cool, with interview footage of Ron English, Shepard, Malcolm McLaren, and other citizens of the night. —Speedway Randy (banksyfilm.com)



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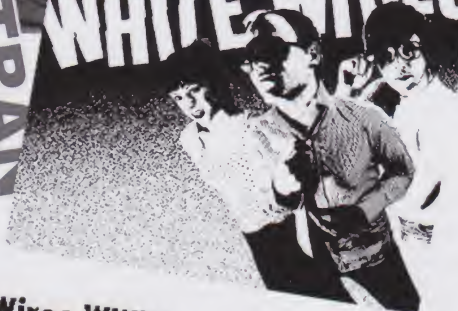
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